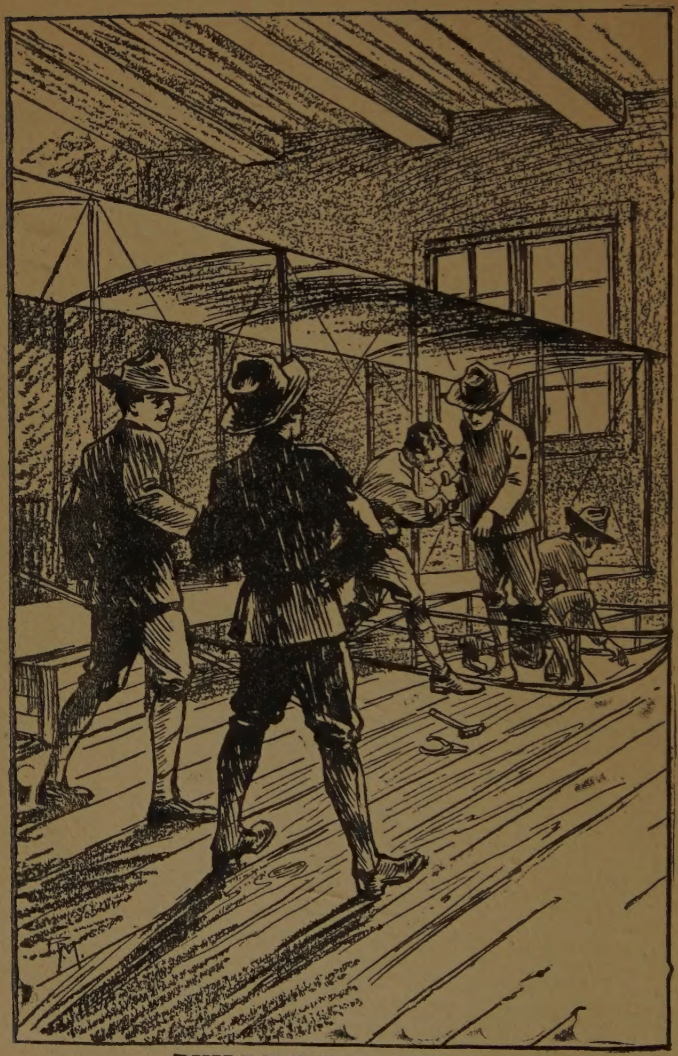
BOY SCOUTS

AIR CRAFT

To Calvin.

From Aunt Emma
Dec. 25. 1914



BUILDING THE GLIDER.

THE BOY SCOUTS
AIR CRAFT

BY

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CONTENTS.

Chapter.		Page.
I.	A Slippery Dividend	9
II.	Many Happenings	18
III.	In and Out	33
IV.	Monkey Again	42
V.	The Work Begun	52
VI.	The Abandoned House	64
VII.	Building the Glider	75
VIII.	Off to the Meet	89
IX.	The Contest	99
X.	Breaking the Tie	107
XI.	The Norwhal's Tusk	113
XII.	The Cave	124
XIII.	Istalling the Engine	138
XIV.	In the Air	148
XV.	The Search	157
XVI.	A Daring Act	166
XVII.	A Triumph	177
XVIII.	Conclusion	187

BOY SCOUT'S AIRCRAFT

CHAPTER I.

A SLIPPERY DIVIDEND.

"GEE, don't it look great!" exclaimed Pepper Blake, as he examined a large official envelope. In the upper left-hand corner, in impressive capitals, it read, "THE UNCAS MINE, Ltd."

"There's probably a fortune in it," said Gerald Moore, who had already extracted a handful of papers from a similar envelope. "A millioniare's life for me."

"In my opinion, it would not be a bad idea to look before you spend it," said clanny Donald Graeme. All promptly followed the advice, as the crackling of stiff official paper testified.

It was a warm morning in June, following the close of the Spring term at the Academy. The Uncas Patrol of the Boy Scouts of America, consisting of Jack Blake, Dick Wilson, Randolph Peyton and the three boys mentioned above, had come together on Rand's porch, to discuss the

news from the Uncas mine, which they had helped to re-discover.

"I can't make out much of the report, but one thing sure there's a check for fifty dollars in mine," said Jack.

"Same here," said Pepper, "and Mr. Royce said most of the first production would have to go for development."

"I have a letter here from Mr. Royce," said Rand, referring to the gentleman who was managing the mine. "He said the surface workings are so rich, he thought we ought to have one dividend, in case they didn't run deeper."

"Three cheers for Mr. Royce," called Dick, and they were given with a will.

"Faith, we all seem to be cheer-full," said Gerald.

"This is too much," said Jack, seizing an army blanket that hung from the railing. With a rush Gerald was tumbled into it, and the five boys proceeded to toss him in the most approved fashion. Gerald had "been there before" and, relaxing himself, enjoyed it as much as they.

The organizing of the Patrol and the exciting adventures that followed, including a robbery and a rescue, are told of in the first volume of the

series, "The Boy Scouts' Patrol." The motor-cycles presented to them as a reward for their courage lead them all into further difficulties and Jack into captivity among some moon-shiners, as related in the "Boy Scouts' Motor-Cycles," but their pluck and energy bring them safely through. The third volume, "Boy Scouts' Canoe Trip," tells how Pepper and Dick were lost in the fog on the Sound and discovered a light-house in distress and became temporary members of the Service; how the Patrol captured some robbers and recovered the directions to the lost mine. "Boy Scouts in the Rockies" tells of their adventures in Winnipeg, where they rescue their friend, Mr. Royce, from his enemies; their hunting among the Indians, and the re-discovery of the lost mine, named "Uncas," in their honor.

The boys had visited an army post, a short time before our story opens, to observe the evolutions of a military aviator. After watching the flights and examining the machines they had come upon some soldiers tossing a comrade in a blanket and had decided to try it as a penalty at the first opportunity. Gerald had quickly furnished the opportunity and things were in full swing, when a voice from the gate called, "Gerald seems to be up

in the air this morning." The boys slid Gerald to the ground and turned to greet Colonel Snow.

"That reminds me——" began the Colonel.

Some trick of speech practically every one has, and Dick's habit was to preface nearly every remark with "That reminds me," so that it was held by the boys to be Dick's sole and personal property, and when any one else made inadvertent use of the expression he was likely to be called to account.

"The Colonel has caught it from Dick," laughed Gerald.

"No, this isn't a story," said the Colonel. "Kennedy is to fly down the river today, and he is due in about an hour. I thought you would like to see him."

"We would! We would!" they chorussed.

"Let's go down to Cliff Point," said Rand. "We should have a good view from there."

"Now, Pepper, if you had your air-ship, you could fly down with him," said Jack.

"I'll fly later without him," announced Pepper, stoutly.

"But you can't buy an aeroplane for fifty dollars," said Dick.

"We can build one for a little more," said Pep-

per. "Look here," and he dragged from his pocket a much-handled page of a New York newspaper. "Here are the plans of a Kennedy machine, and a full description of the materials and construction."

The boys crowded around in interested discussion, when the Colonel reminded them that they had better start for their view-point. As they walked, discussion and interest in air craft grew warmer until they decided to build the machine together.

To Pepper, because of his inventive genius and natural aptitude for mechanics, was intrusted the general direction of affairs. All, however, were to share in the work and to equally own in partnership the completed product.

Don, who was studying his check again, had fallen a little behind the others, when suddenly a hand shot from behind a tree against which he was leaning and whipped the paper from his fingers. He stood dumfounded for a moment and then, as he spied a figure darting through the bushes, he leaped from the road in pursuit. He called to the boys ahead, but, as he did so, his ankle turned and he plunged head-foremost into a patch of deep moss, which smothered his cry. He

staggered to his feet, somewhat dazed and hurried after the fast-disappearing figure before him. As his quarry appeared in the open for a moment he recognized him.

The others walked on unconscious of Don's disappearance. They had hardly reached the point when Jack cried, "There he comes!" and all eyes turned to the swiftly growing spot above the river.

"Crickets!" cried Pepper, "L-look at him come!"

The clatter of the motor was rising to a roar, when suddenly the boys noticed that the cylinders began to miss. The machine was almost opposite them, when it swerved sharply toward the bank. It tilted suddenly, and with the dying crackle of the motor disappeared beyond a fringe of trees near the point.

"Hurry, boys, we may be able to help," exclaimed the Colonel, and they sped down the path and plunged through the trees into an open field.

"There she is," they panted in chorus.

"He's trying to stand on his head," gasped Jack.

"He's only looking at his carburetor," said Pepper, as they came up to the machine. The

aviator, doubled up, was working rapidly at the machinery.

"Can we be of any assistance?" called the Colonel, advancing.

"Well," said the aviator, ruefully, "I'll be glad to have you help me wheel the machine out of this mud." And, indeed, the wheels of the machine were nearly out of sight in the marshy ground. "You are Boy Scouts, aren't you?" he asked, noting their costume, and added, on their affirmative, "I'm glad that you know how to work together. The last volunteers who aided me turned her clear around twice and wrenched a wheel before they found out where they wanted to go."

Mr. Kennedy busied himself cleaning the carburetor while the boys put their shoulders to the plane and rolled it onto higher ground.

"Crickets!" cried Pepper, putting his eyes to work on braces, joints and guy-wires, "isn't she a beauty! We're going to build a machine like yours, Mr. Kennedy. We have all our plans made."

"Let me know when you finish it, boys, and I'll let you know something about driving it. Hold the machine, please, while I crank the motor."

Mr. Kennedy gave the propeller a twist and ran to the seat in front. The boys, though braced and ready, found their heels plowing through the grass before he gave the signal to let go. He rose from the ground and swept out over the river as they sent up a cheer.

"There he goes!" cried Dick.

"Where?" asked a voice behind them, and they turned to see Don limping across the field.

"Hello, where have you been?" asked Rand.

"Chasing my check through the woods," said Don. "Didn't you fellows hear me call?"

"Did it run away?" asked Gerald.

"Did you get it?" queried Pepper, at the same instant.

"Yes! No! Wait, don't mix me up. Monkey Rae snatched it out of my hand, as I walked along. I went after him but I turned my ankle and he got away."

"B-b-but it's no good to him unless it's endorsed," exclaimed Pepper.

"That's the point. I endorsed it just before we started out. I wanted to drawn the money from the bank on the way back."

"O, Solomon, where is thy wisdom!" said

Rand. "That's the first chance I ever knew you to take, Don."

"I think it will be the last if his expression is any sign," said Dick. "Let's go after Monkey."

"I think the best thing," said the Colonel, "would be to go to the bank and stop payment on the check. You can attend to Monkey afterward."

"There he is now!" shouted Gerald, excitedly. They all turned to where a crashing resounded from the bushes on the edge of the field. With one accord they sprinted toward the place and Rand, in the lead, tripped and disappeared headlong into the midst of the turmoil.

CHAPTER II.

MANY HAPPENINGS.

GERALD, who was the next to follow Rand, forced a way through the bushes in a more cautious manner than his predecessor, and as he burst into a small opening, sent up a shout of laughter. The others crowded after him and joined in the merriment. This was the sight that met their gaze.

Within the little space a young calf, badly frightened, was stumbling madly about. The rope by which he was fastened had caught in some manner and Rand, in his wild dive, had some way entangled his legs in it. At every attempt to rise the struggles of the calf brought him to earth, momentarily helpless, but ever striving to regain his feet. The boys quickly caught the frightened calf and helped Rand to get up.

"Where did Monkey go?" asked Don, anxious to recover his lost check.

"I guess I'm the only monkey here," answered

RAND AND THE CALF.

Rand, disgustedly brushing the dirt from his clothes. "I didn't see any other when I came in."

"Oi didn't mane to make a monkey of you," said Gerald. "When Oi heard the noise over here, Oi thought, begorra, 'twas Monkey following Don, and we could just give him a taste of throuble."

"It was your fault, Gerald, but I never thought I had so many feet until I got them tangled in that rope," and Rand got his first laugh out of the incident.

On their return to Creston the boys went at once to the lumber yard to select the pieces needed for their machine. The Colonel had volunteered to stop at the bank to explain about the check and arrange to stop payment.

"I remember I used to eat, once," remarked Dick, as they turned toward the lumber yard.

"Crickets," exclaimed Pepper. "I feel that way, too, but it must have been a long time ago."

"I feel as though I had missed a meal," said Jack. "How about you, Don?"

"I might eat a little, if I had something," replied Don, non-committally.

"I move," said Pepper, "that the committee on construction adjourn for lunch. The motion is

carried," he continued without a pause, and the boys' stomachs heartily endorsed the resolution. They agreed to meet later at the lumber-yard, and hurried away to the anticipated meal. An hour later had been named for the boys to reassemble.

As Gerald and Dick waited near the appointed time for the others to arrive, Dick suddenly darted across the street with a shout.

"There's Mr. Whilden, with the Colonel," he called, as Gerald followed.

"I wonder if some of the Uncas Patrol was not on duty," said Mr. Whilden, with a twinkle in his eye.

He shook hands heartily with the boys, and inquired for the others. As he spoke they turned the corner together.

"When did you return from the West?" asked Rand, after greetings had been exchanged.

"The doctors let me come back two weeks ago," replied Whilden, with a smile. "They say I will do very well, if I don't have too much excitement, so you must promise to keep out of scrapes while I am with you."

"We'll be as calm as a summer day," exclaimed Gerald.

"If nothing happens," amended cautious Donald, and there was a general laugh.

"Do you make aeroplane motors, Mr. Whilden?" asked Pepper, who had been thinking deeply.

"That is a remarkable question, Pepper," replied Mr. Whilden. "The Dart Motor Cycle Company has been experimenting along that very line for some time, and I have come to Creston to see an inventor who holds the rights for certain improvements. What made you ask?"

"We are planning to build an aeroplane," Pepper exclaimed, "and I thought if we could buy an engine from you, we would be sure of having a good one. What would a forty horse-power motor cost us?"

"We have not figured our costs, yet," said Mr. Whilden, "but I think we can make satisfactory terms."

"We are going over to the lumber yard to select the wood for our frame-work," said Rand.

"Perhaps I can help you," said Mr. Whilden. "I have examined a number of machines lately, and I think I have learned something about them."

"We will be glad to have your practical experi-

ence," returned Rand as they crossed the street. "Pepper is our expert on theory."

"Pepper has the practical experience in eating," remarked Gerald.

"Well, theory doesn't amount to much in that line," rejoined the Colonel with a laugh, and they turned to the discussion of white ash and spruce.

As they walked through the lanes between great piles of lumber, Pepper started suddenly forward with a shout and darted around a turn. The others halted for a moment, startled at his action. As they started forward again he returned.

"N-n-now there's g-going to be trouble," exclaimed Pepper.

"What's the matter?" asked Dick.

"I just saw Monkey Rae look around that corner," said Pepper, "and s-something always happens when he is around."

"You're always seeing Monkey Rae," returned Rand. "We'll go and find the place where he *isn't* and then you'll feel better."

The boys searched the alley that Pepper had turned into but found no one.

"Faith, we found the place where he isn't all right," remarked Gerald, "but Oi've a doubt, now, if we can find where Pepper *is*."

Sure enough Pepper had vanished again, but not for long. There was a crash behind and above them, and two or three boards began to slide over the edge of the pile above Mr. Whilden's head. Don and Gerald sprang desperately forward and drove the ends of the boards to one side. They fell half-upright against the pile and a dozen planks cascaded thunderously down them, while Mr. Whilden stood beneath with Don and Gerald.

There was an instant's silence, followed by the sound of a struggle, and Pepper and Monkey, tightly wrapped in each other's arms, rolled over the edge and tobogganed gracefully into the pile of lumber at the bottom, where they landed with a dull thud. Pepper was partly stunned by the blow and, as the boys started forward, Monkey leaped to his feet and raced toward the river at the end of the alley. By the time the boys had clambered over the boards he had plunged in and was out of sight.

"Why didn't you hold him?" demanded Pepper, indignantly, sitting up suddenly.

"Faith, you were doing that same yoursilf," answered Gerald. "We didn't want to interrupt you."

"Are you hurt?" asked Rand, helping Pepper to his feet.

"No," returned Pepper, "but I feel pretty well shaken up."

"I suppose," said Dick, "you might call Monkey a Pepper-shaker."

"You might, but it wouldn't be safe," replied Jack.

"Boys," exclaimed Mr. Whilden, shaking hands heartily with Don and Gerald, "I think you saved me from serious injury. You seem to have something happening wherever you go, but you can certainly be depended on to bring everyone out all right."

"They typify the Scout motto, Mr. Whilden," said the Colonel, returning from the end of the alley. "To 'be prepared,' is a hard motto to live up to."

"Did you find anyone, Colonel?" asked Don, to turn the subject from the unexpected praise he had brought upon himself.

"Only this," returned the Colonel, and held forth a ragged fluttering slip of paper.

"My check," exclaimed Don, springing forward.

"Not all of it, Don, I am sorry to say. The endorsement is missing."

Don examined the fragment but the left-hand quarter of the check was gone, and with it the carefully penned signature.

The boys started to move away, but the Colonel called them back.

"The Scouts always leave a clean slate," he reminded them. "Those boards are hardly an example of our rules."

The boys accepted the reproof, and with three on the pile and three below, swiftly shifted the planks back to their place.

They had hardly reached the ground when a clamor arose in the street outside. Jack scrambled to the top of a pile of boards near the fence.

"There's a mad bull in the street!" he shouted, as he dropped over the fence. The others rushed after him, leaving the Colonel and Mr. Whilden to make their way to the entrance. Dick was the first to reach the top of the pile and the sight that met his eye caused him to search hurriedly in his pockets. An infuriated bull was charging with lowered head upon a frightened woman holding a child by the hand, who stood helpless in the street. In three seconds Dick snatched his sling from one

pocket, a pebble from another, and sent the little missile on its errand with all the force he could muster. It was a long shot, but partly by luck, it struck the bull in the sensitive spot just behind the ear.

The animal slid a dozen feet with stiffened legs through a cloud of dust. He came to a stop almost touching the child, but turned with a hoarse bellow to attack his new enemy. By this time the boys had reached the ground and Jack was scarcely a dozen feet from the bull. He tried to check himself, when his foot slipped and he slid forward at full length on the earth.

Pepper, recalling the tricks of the bull-fighters, whipped off his coat and swung it desperately across the bull's face as he came on. Again the beast checked himself to turn against his daring foe. Pepper sprang aside, and Rand, crossing at a new angle, flung a handful of dust from the road, the handiest weapon, into his eyes. The bull threw up his head and charged swiftly on the fleet-footed Rand, who darted toward the entrance to the yard.

The opportunity offering, Gerald struck the animal heavily on the shoulder as it passed and leaped back as the horns swung in his direction.

He had miscalculated the nearness of the fence, however, and brought up hard against it. Gerald kept his presence of mind, and before the bull could swing his heavy body, sprang forward, clapped both hands on the animal's spine and vaulted lightly over his back.

The bull stopped, bewildered at the sudden disappearance of his enemy, then turned on Rand, who was nearest him, and charged again. Rand stood coolly in the gate-way indifferent, it seemed, but really calculating the chances until the bull was scarcely six feet away, then he darted aside and let the maddened beast thunder on down the passage. A dozen hands pushed the gates shut and held the bull a prisoner within.

By this time a man had arrived with a rope and, assisted over the fence by the cheering crowd, proceeded to the final capture. In the narrow space within he soon entangled the bull in a noose, and with the help of the boys, hobbled him, and left him to cool his temper.

"Hello, here's some more paper," exclaimed Jack, bending between some fallen boards.

"Hurrah, it's the other piece of Don's check," cried Rand. "See whether it fits, Don."

Don smoothed the crumpled pieces and found that they matched perfectly.

"If you had not recovered it," said Mr. Whilden, you could have gotten another. As it is, it will save some bookkeeping if you patch it up and deposit it."

The boys then turned their attention to the selection of spruce and ash free from knots and smooth-grained, according to Pepper's list, and arranged to have them shaped. The dealer promised delivery within ten days and gave them an estimate of cost.

"You know, boys, that an aeroplane will not carry more than two passengers for any great distance," remarked the Colonel.

The boys looked at each other in dismay.

"I never thought of that!" exclaimed Pepper.

"We can't afford to build two," added Dick despondently.

"The cost of the framework is comparatively slight," said the Colonel. "Why not make a glider as well as a motor plane? That would give you experience along two lines.

"Good! exclaimed Rand. "What do you say, fellow Scouts?"

"Fine," they answered together.

"It's not easy to discourage them, is it, Colonel?" remarked Mr. Whilden, aside.

"No," returned Colonel Snow, "and that is the kind of chap one enjoys helping."

"Yes, indeed," agreed Mr. Whilden, and to himself, "I think we can make it two engines—if my little plan works."

Don separated from the others as they left the yard, and turning toward the town center, hastened to the bank. It was almost closing time and the outer office was empty except for the cashier and the assistant, neither of whom were known to Don. He pushed the pieces of the check through the cashier's window, explaining that it had been accidentally torn.

"One minute," said the cashier, hurriedly, "I would like to verify this signature. It is a little unusual to receive a check this way."

He stepped quickly into the rear offices, out of sight, while Don, feeling rather uncomfortable, waited at the window. There was a murmur of voices from the back office, and a man stepped from a door opening on the corridor. He made as if to pass Don, then stopped and placed one hand on his shoulder.

"You must come with me," he said, and he

threw back his coat and displayed a special officer's star.

Don was startled, but held his place firmly. "But for what and why am I under suspicion?" he asked.

"You have attempted to cash a check on which payment was stopped," replied the officer.

"But it is my check!" exclaimed Don, indignantly. "I can tell you all about it."

"No doubt," returned the officer, dryly, "but Colonel Snow has already told us about it, so you can wait and tell the Justice."

In spite of his objections Don was hurried away. The court, of course, was closed and the Judge not to be found at that hour of the day, so at the end of half an hour he found himself in a little cell with a mournful view of a stable and carriage-yard. He was in no way cast down, and promptly secured the privilege of sending word to Colonel Snow. He knew that he had but to prove his identity to secure his liberty.

CHAPTER III.

IN AND OUT.

THAT same evening, after supper, five boys were grouped on Rand's porch, when Colonel Snow came up the walk. There was an exchange of greetings, and the Colonel seated himself on the steps, the boys stretching out on the grass around him. Don's absence was noted, but the Colonel soon had the attention of all.

"I came here tonight to make a sugestion," he began. "Mr. Whilden spoke to me this afternoon before I left him of a plan he had in mind. You know his Company is taking up the manufacture of aeroplane engines."

"And we'll take up the engines," muttered Dick.

"Faith, Oi think they'll be taking us up," returned Gerald, who overheard him.

"Mr. Whilden's plan was this," continued the Colonel. "The Dart Motor Cycle Company will institute a gliding contest, without motors, all makes of gliders will be eligible, the plane gliding the farthest, when started from a given height,

to receive a prize of one of the new motors. The Company will be repaid by the advertising their motors will receive through the contest."

"Hurrah!" shouted Pepper. "We'll have two motors after all."

"In my opinion," remarked Rand, imitating Don's well known accent, "it would no be a bad plan to wait till we win it before cheering."

"I wonder where Don is," said Jack to Rand, amid the noise of argument and discussion. "I hurried off this afternoon to write up the story about the bull fight for father's paper, and I have not seen him since."

Suppose we go over to his house," replied Rand. "Perhaps he is in trouble again. You know that Pepper always says we are 'in for it' whenever we see Monkey Rae."

"All right," agreed Jack. "The others are so busy with Colonel Snow that they will not miss us."

Don's home lay some distance away, and they had to pass through the lower part of the town to reach it. They were just approaching the small, brick jail, when Jack uttered an exclamation. The full moon showed a head framed in a window from which the bars had been removed, while

from the sill a man was lowering himself by his hands to the roof of a carriage shed just below. Another person could be seen about to follow, but neither paid any attention to the spectators.

"That is certainly a cool piece of work," gasped Rand.

"I'll watch here," said Jack, whose keen mind scented a "story" for the paper, "while you hurry for the police."

"I can't leave you alone," returned Rand, with dismay. "They are probably desperate men."

"It's the only plan," urged Jack; "one of us must stay to keep track of them while the other gets help."

Rand yielded and sped away for the police. As soon as he turned the corner Jack stepped into the shadow of the next building and, drawing himself noiselessly to the top of the fence, dropped into the stable-yard. By this time the men had also dropped into the yard and disappeared in the shadow of the stable. Jack crept cautiously toward the office of the stable, where a dim light showed on the ground floor. Suddenly a heavy arm was flung across his mouth, dragging his head backward, and a strong hand pinioned his hands.

"I've got one," growled a deep voice, in a bass whisper.

A slighter form quickly and adeptly lashed his hands and feet, and he was dropped under the shed with a horse blanket over his head to stifle any sound.

It will be remembered that Don, alone in his cell, was awaiting a reply to his note. He stood gazing abstractedly from the window.

"I believe I could easily escape from here," he mentally mused, "those bars are far from being secure." Suddenly his attention was attracted by two men who halted outside the locked gate of the livery stable-yard. It was dark by that time, except for the reflected light of the moon, which had almost risen above the house-tops. There was a creak below him and one gate swung partly open and quickly closed again. He could dimly see the two figures cross the yard and crouch in the shadow of the door-way. At this moment the jailor's key rattled in the lock as he came with Don's supper.

"Two men are breaking into the office of the stable next door," he whispered sharply. The jailor stepped to the window and peered over

Don's shoulder. A faint glow appeared in the window as he watched.

"By heck, you're right," he exclaimed. "We must ketch them fellows."

He hurried to the door but it had swung shut when he left it and the spring lock had caught.

"This is a nice fix," he grunted, as he aimed a heay kick at the door.

"Wait," said Don, suddenly. "We'll frighten them if we make a noise."

"How are we going to get out then?" asked the jailor.

"These bars are only set in wood," explained Don, "and it is pretty well rotted away. We can take them right out and climb onto the roof of the shed below."

The jailor tested the bars with his hand, and with steady pressure he and Don split the damp and rotten wood of the frame-work with hardly a sound. The bars were drawn in and tossed on the cot and the jailor lowered himself from the window. He was physically a powerful man and he was minded to keep this opportunity for fame and reward in his own hands, so, instead of going for help, he dropped into the shadow of the shed and made his way toward the lighted office. Don,

too excited to notice two boys who were watching from the sidewalk, followed after.

"Stick close to me," whispered the jailor, hoarsely. "They usually leave a man outside to watch."

They advanced a little further into the darkness, when he sprang noiselessly forward. There was a faint sound of struggling and he grunted, over his shoulder, "I've got one!"

Don's hand came in contact with a hitching-rope on a post, and he quickly detached it. In half a minute their captive was bound and bestowed beneath some horse blankets close to the wall.

They crept cautiously toward the doorway, and, finding no one outside peered within. The room was empty, but from the back room came a flickering light, apparently from a candle, and a sound of low voices, mingled with a metallic click-click. The jailor sprang across the little room with one bound, whipping out his revolver as he did so. Don was just behind him.

"Hands up!" shouted the jailor, as he leaped through the door-way. Don had one glimpse of a man kneeling before the safe, drill in hand, when the light went out, and he heard a body crash

against the jailor, who threw it off with a grunt, and rushed on into the room.

Don followed after and found himself instantly in conflict with someone apparently not much heavier than himself. The battle raged furiously for a moment to an accompaniment of thumps and heavy breathing. Then Don heard a heavy bump, followed by a flash and a report. At the same moment he drove his opponent heavily backward toward the wall where he slid limply sidewise to the floor. There was a moment's silence in the room.

"Come here and help me tie this feller up, quick," gasped a strained voice in the darkness.

Don, shaken and excited, crossed the room and grasped the reins that were thrust into his hands. As quickly as he could he bound the hands and feet of the man on the floor.

"Come on, now," said the man beside him, rising, and he flung open the window, sprang over the sill and vanished.

Don halted, dumb with amazement for he realized at once that he had tied the wrong man! He sprang to the window to shout after the fugitive, but his late opponent attacked him furiously from the rear. The battle continued over the prostrate

form of the jailor, who was now thrashing about on the floor and shouting at the top of his voice. Slowly a light appeared in the room and Don saw in the midst of his struggle, that the waste-basket, fired by a match accidentally trod upon, was flaming up about the desk.

There was a rush of feet in the yard without, and just then Don tripped across the body of the jailor and sprawled at full length on the floor. He scrambled to his feet, but his antagonist had disappeared through the open window.

Three officers rushed into the room, only to find a much battered boy beating the flames with his coat, and a bound and helpless man on the floor. Don had wisely decided that it was better to help with the fire than to pursue one who knew the back ways of the town better than he.

"Which way did they go?" demanded one officer, as another stooped and released the jailor whom he recognized.

"Out—that—window!" gasped Don, flailing away with his coat. Out of the window went the policemen, while the other two, with the jailor, beat down the fire with whatever came to hand.

A citizen rushed in with a pail of water. Another soon followed, and in five minutes the office

was a soggy wreck with charred and steaming walls.

The owner of the stable hurried in and circumstances were quickly explained to him.

"I am very grateful to you," he said to the bruised and blackened Don. "I will be glad to reward you for your courage and determination."

"I was very glad to help," returned Don, sturdily, "and I cannot accept a reward for what I have done. I belong to the Uncas Patrol of the Boy Scouts and we are pledged to help everyone where we can."

"At least I can replace the clothes you have ruined," urged the man, and to this Don quite willingly agreed.

The jailor was not so backward however, and promised to be on hand in the morning to receive what the liveryman thought fitting.

Don and the jailor, almost exhausted, passed out through the crowd together. In their weariness each forgot that Don was a prisoner and, with a brief good-night he turned toward his home. An unintentional escape, of which he had not heard the last.

And Jack, half smothered and forgotten, lay helpless beneath the blankets under the carriage-shed!

CHAPTER IV.

MONKEY AGAIN.

AFTER the crowd had dispersed, the officer who had vainly pursued the thieves was left on guard in the stable yard. He made a thorough search of the officers, then investigated the yard. As he finished his tour beneath the carriage shed he stumbled over a soft bundle in the darkness. The contact of his boot promptly brought forth a muffled shout, whereupon he fell upon the bundle which squirmed terrifically in his clasp. He bore it staggeringly into the middle of the yard. Here he carefully unwrapped it and Jack, half smothered emerged from his cocoon of blankets.

"Well, what are you doing here?" questioned the guardian of the peace, "and all tied up, too?"

"I'm sitting here looking at you, like a couple of monkeys," replied Jack, angrily.

"Do you mean I'm a couple of monkeys?" demanded the officer, fiercely.

"No," said Jack, his sense of humor coming to his rescue, "I meant that I was sitting here like a monkey. Don't you think it's time to take these ropes off? They're very uncomfortable."

"They'll do very well where they are, until you explain where you got them. I'm not sure about them monkeys yet, either," came the threatening answer.

"I saw a couple of men escaping from the jail into this yard and, while my friend went for the officers, I climbed over the fence to see what they were doing."

"And helped them break in, I suppose," interrupted the officer.

"I didn't," returned Jack, indignantly. "While I was going along under the shed, someone grabbed me from behind and tied me up. There were two of them and they shoved me under these blankets, where I couldn't make any noise."

Jack had at last worked the ropes from his hands, but made no move. The officer slowly loosened the ropes on his feet, then stood up.

"That part of it sounds all right," he said, "but how about them monkeys. I remember very clear that you said 'monkeys' and you was one of them. How about the other?"

Jack rose slowly to his feet and stretched his cramped muscles.

"I don't suppose you can leave this place," began Jack.

"My orders are to watch here," replied the officer. "But you'd better tell me what you meant before I begin to guess."

"Well," returned Jack, edging toward the gate, "I guess there must have been another one around somewhere," and he darted into the street where the officer soon gave up the pursuit.

The next morning when Don awoke, he recalled his recent difficulties and resolved to adjust them at once. Having located Colonel Snow, he explained to him what had occurred and asked his assistance.

"As nearly as I can see," said the Colonel, "you want me to help you get out of a jail you are not in."

"Well," replied Don, "I would not say that, but I would like to have you help me stay out of the jail that I may get into."

"I think I can fix the trouble," continued the Colonel. "I entirely overlooked the fact yesterday that you might have trouble in cashing your check."

As they walked through the town the Colonel questioned Don about the robbery.

"What became of the fellow you tied up under the shed?" he asked.

Don halted, thunderstruck.

"I forgot all about him," he said. "I suppose he got away in the crowd."

"Suppose we go over and see," returned the Colonel. "It is not far out of our way, and if he is still there he will need looking after."

They found a small crowd of curious spectators before the gate, held in check by an officer on guard.

"May we go in and look around?" asked the Colonel. "I have reason to believe that there may be some evidence in the yard."

The man hesitated. "You see, Colonel, my orders are not to allow anyone in."

"I wouldn't have you disobey orders," replied the Colonel. "If you tell me who was on duty here last night I think I can learn what I want to know."

"'Twas Flannigan," said the officer. "I relieved him an hour ago."

"Thank you," returned the Colonel, and the

two went on to the station-house, which was near the bank.

When they entered, they found Flannigan had just finished making his report. He recognized Colonel Snow, whose interest in police affairs was known to the entire force. He knew Don, also, in spite of the fact that his face had been disguised with dirt when he saw it last.

"You were on duty at Burns' livery-stable last night," began the Colonel. "Did you see anyone after Young Graeme left?"

Flannigan looked surprised. "I did," he replied. "I found a young fellow in a pile of blankets that was about the most impudent I ever met."

"Did you arrest him?" demanded Donald. "The jailor and I tied him up, when we first went in."

"Think of that, now," said the officer. "He told me he came in to see where the two men were going that broke out of jail. Then, when I untied his feet, he called me a monkey and went running away."

Donald felt rather guilty at this unconscious reference to his imprisonment, and allowed the Colonel to finish the conversation. The jailor

evidently had not told of his prisoner's escape.

As they left the police station, however, the jailor appeared and recognized Don as he approached.

"I'm sorry, after what you did last night," he said, for he bore no grudge for having been tied up by Don in the dark. "I'll have to take you back with me. I thought you might come back this morning, anyway."

"I was on my way," replied Don. "I was so exhausted last night that I forgot I was a prisoner."

"Me, too," chimed in the jailor, pleased at having his explanation made for him.

"I will be responsible for him," interrupted the Colonel. "I will have the complaining officer and your prisoner before the judge at once and have the complaint withdrawn. If you care to come with us, you can then formally release the prisoner, and last night's affair need not appear."

The jailor assented and, after a few minutes at the bank to adjust the matter of the check, they went with the special officer before the Judge. Matters were soon arranged and Don once more became a free citizen.

In the meantime, Rand got the other members

of the Patrol together to aid in locating the lost Scouts. He told them of the adventures of the night before, of his inability to find Jack when he returned with the officers. How he searched the neighborhood while they entered the stable, but was forced to return without him. As he spoke Jack appeared and was greeted with a chorus of welcome and a rush of questions.

"One at a time," exclaimed Jack, laughing at their enthusiastic greeting.

"Where did you go to last night?" demanded Rand, when his voice could be heard. "I couldn't find you at all when I came back."

"I heard you," said Jack coquettishly. "I was hiding under a blanket."

"Hiding under a blanket!" exclaimed Rand, in astonishment. "What for?"

"I was waiting for a man," returned Jack, with a chuckle.

"You might have let me know about it," said Rand with an injured air. "I hunted all over the place for you."

"You must take some lessons in hunting, then, for I was there all the time."

"Why didn't you come out?"

"I couldn't," replied Jack. "It was necessary for me to keep quiet."

"It sounds like a plot," exclaimed Dick. "How did you get there?"

"I climbed over the fence," returned Jack, innocently.

"Look here," Rand announced, with determination, "if you don't explain yourself I'll get a cork-screw and yank the information out of you."

"If you insist," returned Jack, "I suppose I will have to elucidate."

"If you try to do anything with words that size, you'll choke," warned Rand. "Proceed carefully."

"Very well," sighed Jack. "I climbed over the fence and went along under the shed."

"That was bright," interrupted Don. "Didn't you know that we were two dangerous escaped prisoners?"

"I was trailing the villains," returned Jack, melodramatically. "As I walked along under the shed, a man approached me from behind. The instant I knew he was there, I threw my neck into one of his arms and my body into the other, thus rendering him helpless."

"You!" exclaimed Don, breathlessly. "That

was the jailor. I was the one who tied you up!"

"You!" exclaimed Jack in his turn. "That was a nice friendly trick!"

"We thought you were one of the robbers," explained Don.

"Well," continued Jack, "you put me in a good safe place, anyway. After I stayed there a while a lot of people came yelling through the yard, spoiling my quiet evening and never offering to help me out at all, although I tried to make someone hear me. Then they all went and left me all alone. That is, I thought I was alone, till some one came along and kicked me in the ribs. I spoke right out loud, then, and he took me out in the middle of the yard and unwrapped me. Then I had to spend fifteen minutes coaxing that thick-headed policeman to let me go."

"You must have had a pleasant evening," remarked Gerald.

"I did afterward," said Jack. "When I had nearly reached home, a clod of earth hit me in the back. I turned around and there was Monkey Rae following me. "I'll git even wid youse, Jack Blake," he yelled, 'and I'll bet some of those other fellers get some, too.' I ran after him, but he went off down the old road, and I lost him."

"Why, there's nothing down there but that old Barker house," exclaimed Dick.

"The old Barker house," commented Jack. "Why, that old place has been vacant ever since I can remember."

"That is probably where he and his father are hiding," said Rand, and with this suggestion they turned to the plans of the machines they were to build.

CHAPTER V.

THE WORK BEGUN.

TEN days later the Patrol met to begin the construction of the machines. Rand's father permitted them to use a large shed for the work, and here the boys laid out the lumber. Pepper, as expert on construction, explained the arrangement.

"The first thing to do," he announced, "is to get all the pieces of the same size and shape, on the plans, and mark them so that we can find them readily when needed."

With so many hands to help the heap of lumber was soon changed into a dozen piles of varying sizes. Pepper proudly produced the plans which he had enlarged from the newspaper prints. The bundles were marked, one after another, Pepper announcing their purpose as the sizes were called off to him.

"But some of these pieces have two or three different names," exclaimed Dick.

"They are only rough-cut," replied Pepper. "You didn't expect to have all your work cut out for you, did you?"

"Sure," said Gerald, "if you didn't cut it out for us, Oi think we have more work cut out for us than we expected.

"In my opinion," announced Don, "it would not be a bad idea for Pepper to explain the method of work. Then we will keep out of each other's way a bit better."

"You're right!" cried Jack, and urged the plan with cries of "Speech! speech!" Thus encouraged Pepper mounted a saw-horse and, maintaining his balance with some difficulty, proceeded with his explanation.

"First of all a space must be cleared in the middle of the floor. Then we will measure off and chalk out the plant of the *fuselage.*"

"What is the *fuselage?*" enquired Don. "It sounds like a French bill-of-fare."

"That is the body of the machine," replied Pepper. "Nearly all the parts have French names because the French were the first to put into common use descriptions and books on the construction of aeroplanes."

"Great applause!" exclaimed Jack, pretending to take down a speech, like a reporter.

"After the plan is marked out full size," continued Pepper, not noticing the interruption, "we will build the *fuselage* of the aeroplane directly over it. This will prevent any mistake in size or in placing the parts. Then we will begin the construction of the planes."

He suddenly over-balanced himself and alighted with a crash on the saw-horse, which tilted and dropped him to the floor.

"In my opinion," said Don, when he saw that Pepper was unhurt, "it would not be a bad idea to wait for the planes before trying that trick again."

"I think you are right, Don," returned Pepper, picking himself up, "b—but there is this much about the law of *gravity,* it doesn't p—put you in jail when you go against it."

There was a shout of laughter from the boys at this reference to Don's recent difficulties, and he realized that the point had been cleverly turned against him.

The outline was cleverly drawn on the smooth floor and the last of the dimensions were being marked when Colonel Snow appeared in the doorway.

"I see you are getting right to work," he remarked, after greetings had been exchanged. "Where did you get this idea for construction?"

"I read that they used it in some of the big shops," replied Pepper. "It is almost the same thing as having a model to work from."

"People were not always so scientific in their methods," said the Colonel. "In fact that is one thing the old Romans rather lacked."

"Did they try to build aeroplanes?" questioned Dick, in astonishment.

"Not exactly," returned the Colonel, with a smile. "They did have some ideas of flying, though, but they were not very practical. Do you know the story of Icarus?"

"Perhaps we can get some points from him," said Jack, who was always interested in "news," even if it was not strictly up-to-date.

"The Romans," continued the Colonel, "were dreamers of that world-old dream—that man might fly. All nations of which we know the writings have some story of a man of their race who was carried away by birds or was borne through the air by more supernatural means. The Roman hero, however, conceived the idea that he might build a pair of wings, like those of a

bird, with which to fly. According to the tale, he made some forms of wax into which he inserted eagle's feather. These wings he attached to his shoulders by means of straps and, after some practice, was able to fly. He then made a pair for his son and together they attempted to cross the Mediterranean Sea. The son, delighted at his new powers, flew higher and higher, his father following in an effort to restrain his rashness. Too late they turned back for they had approached so near the sun that the wax was melted from their wings and they fell into the sea, and were drowned."

"The Romans didn't know much about the sun," remarked Pepper, his opinion of the ancients having fallen greatly.

"At any rate," returned the Colonel, "it was more than they knew about flying for it was scarcely twenty-five years ago that the world began to learn something of the art."

"Who was the first man to fly successfully?" asked Rand.

"I think Otto Libenthal was the first to make practical experiments from a scientific point of view," returned the Colonel. "I will tell you about him if it doesn't interfere with your work."

"They are waiting for me," interjected Pepper, who was busily laying out dimensions on the boards before him. "I would like to hear about him anyway."

"He was a German," continued the Colonel. "He was much interested in the problem and planned to learn by experiment whether human flight was possible. He began at first with different forms of wings or planes. He finally adopted a form nearly round and very deeply hollowed, compared with modern planes. With two of these planes, one on each side, he made a glider, with which he covered considerable distance from small hills or other moderate elevations. In the course of his experiments he made over thirteen hundred glides, of which he kept record. He noted that in a moderate breeze he sometimes kept the same height for half a minute or more. Sometimes, in the face of a stronger wind he rose above his starting point, just as a gull will do after rising from the water. Before he had arrived at any definite conclusions, however, his glider was upset in a tricky wind and he was killed in the fall. His machine lacked a very necessary thing—a method of balancing. His records proved of great value to those who fol-

lowed him, and were the basis of nearly all after experiments."

"But that wasn't really a flying machine," objected Don.

"No," replied the Colonel. "That came later. Within the next few years half a dozen machines were built that were more or less successful. Our own Professor Langley, of the Smithsonian Institute at Washington, built an aeroplane. The model which he first tried out made successful flights up to half a mile in length. His full-sized machine which is still preserved was equipped with a very light steam engine. It is now believed that it can fly, but at the time of trial it was wrecked by an obstruction on the rails of the launching apparatus and the people promptly pronounced it a failure. Langley lived but a short time after, unable, as many believe, to face the derisive comments of the newspapers on the failure of his life's work."

"They didn't give him a fair chance," exclaimed Dick, indignantly.

"No, they didn't," replied the Colonel, "but he helped to prepare the way for those who followed him, and his name and work will not be forgotten."

"Did the Wrights come next?" asked Rand, anxious to keep the credit for all the discoveries in this country.

"They were the first to be successful with motor-propelled flight, but you mustn't think they succeeded as suddenly as it appeared in the newspapers. They went at it in a scientific manner and experimented for years with different forms of models. They kept careful records of their work with different shapes of planes, testing them for gliding powers and stability. Then they worked on the lifting power of different forms at different angles to a current of air. Having found the best form, they built a glider and tested that in still air and against the wind. Their great improvement was their system of balancing by bending the rear parts of the planes at the outer ends, so that one side gave more lifting power than the other. When they felt sure of the glider, they installed a motor. They found then, that their figures didn't work out the same with a power driven machine, so they set to work again and revised them. Finally, when they felt sure that everything was right, they set out and made the first long flight in the heavier-than-air machine, covering thirty-eight miles in a twenty-five

mile wind! Don't you think they earned their fame?"

"They were geniuses!" exclaimed Rand.

"In my opinion," said Don, "it was hard work and perseverance that did it."

"You are both right, then," laughed the Colonel. "Somebody once said that genius is an infinite capacity for taking pains."

"It's time some geniuses began taking pains with this work," announced Pepper.

"I feel more like taking lunch instead," returned Dick.

"Ah reckon it's about time, honey," added Rand, testing the looseness of his belt; and the construction department retired for refreshments.

After lunch, Dick arrived before the others, and he and Rand went out to the shed together. Rand swung open the door and, at the first glance, uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"The tools are gone!" he cried.

Dick followed him in, and a hurried search showed that they were not in the place.

"Nobody ever comes out here, do they?" asked Dick.

"It looks as if somebody had come *in* here," returned Rand.

They had been hopelessly examining the ground outside the shed, when Dick suddenly exclaimed. "I have it! look here!"

Rand hurried to where Dick was bending over, about thirty feet from the shed. A dozen ant-hills appeared amid the grass. Three of them partly destroyed, showed the print of a shoe.

"It's fresh," said Dick. "The ants haven't cleared the holes yet."

"Perhaps we can trail him," urged Rand, starting forward. Dick moved a little to one side and they advanced in parallel lines.

"He here went," called Rand, as he passed a crushed dandelion, and they found themselves at the edge of the field. After climbing the fence they were at fault until, casting about, Dick found another print under a large tree. "He got the tree between himself and the shed," Rand pointed out. "He must have gone in a straight line from here."

"Then he headed for the woods," returned Dick, noting a patch of woodland straight ahead.

They found only a single sign between them and the woods, but as soon as they entered the

shadows, they found clear tracks on the half-bare earth.

"It's a boy," exclaimed Dick, measuring the stride with his eye, and noting the size of the foot.

The tracks turned abruptly to one side, and came out on the edge of a sharp drop of about twenty feet, at the side of a road. Rand looked at it in surprise.

"It's the old road," he exclaimed.

"Monkey Rae!" added Dick, remembering Jack's story. "We might have known it."

"Well, come on," said Rand doggedly, and they slid down to the road in a cloud of dust.

The sky had become rapidly overcast in the last fifteen minutes, and thunder was growling almost constantly. Rand and Dick were too intent in their pursuit, however, to care about the weather. They kept close to one side of the road, in the shadow of the trees, until they approached the house, when they turned through an old orchard. They crept under the fence and beneath a wagon, which was too new to belong to the abandoned farm. As they reached this point the storm broke and they quickly realized that their shelter was not of the best. The house showed no light in the

deep dusk, and, as the storm drew breath after the first downpour, they made a rush for the veranda.

"It is just as wet here," whispered Rand, after a few minutes beneath the sieve-like roof.

Dick tip-toed away to the door, then beckoned to Rand. The door was not locked, and they slipped inside and closed it behind them. They found themselves in deep gloom, while the dull roar of the rain seemed to re-echo from all the empty rooms around them. Suddenly Dick grasped Rand by the arm as the creak of rusty hinges echoed down the stairs. There was a pause, another creak, and the door slammed with a force that shook the house. At the same instant a deep groan came from the corner behind them. One glance over their shoulders and they stood rooted to the spot. A faint, blue, ghostly glow, of the size of a man's head, flickered before their eyes, and vanished!

CHAPTER VI.

THE ABANDONED HOUSE.

RAND and Dick, with one accord, darted down the hall and through a partly opened door. The heavily rolling thunder without covered the sound of their foot-steps. With the door closed, they faced each other for a moment, breathing heavily.

"That was too sudden for me," confessed Rand in a low tone.

"Me, too," said Dick, and stood listening.

By lightning flashes in the twilight of the storm, they could see the bare walls, from which the plaster had fallen in great patches. The broken and decaying lathes swung and rattled weirdly across great gaps in the wall. The boys moved nearer the windows, and looked out at the subsiding storm.

"I think it's clearing," remarked Rand.

"If there is going to be anything more like

that," returned Dick, "I had rather stay out in the wet."

"Look here," said Rand, suddenly. "I read somewhere that decaying wood is phosporescent."

"Phosphorescent?" enquired Dick.

"Yes. It glows in the dark like a wet match."

"You mean that thing we saw? Well, there's plenty of rotten wood around here, but what made it go out?"

"A little br—," Rand stopped in mid-sentence, while his hair rose on end. Shriek after shriek rang through the house ending in a groan that seemed to shake the floor. As they stood transfixed, the storm once more asserted itself and burst with renewed fury. Dick sprang toward the window, but Rand caught his arm.

"Wait a minute," he commanded. "If it is a ghost it can't hurt us and if it is a man we can take care of ourselves. I'm scared, but I'm not going to run."

Dick's courage returned with Rand's determination, and he felt a little angry at having been so frightened.

"I didn't think I was superstitious," he said, "but even if I am, I'm with you. Give the word and we'll search the house."

"It isn't superstition," returned Rand. "Our feelings just get the best of us because we hear or see something we don't understand. If we try to find a reason for strange things, it proves we don't think they are supernatural."

They both felt braced up by this argument and, close together, went quietly into the hall. The mere fact of doing something, further restored their courage, and when Rand reached the room nearest the door they had entered by, he grasped the knob without hesitation. He opened the door slowly and, hearing no sound within, entered. Dick followed.

At first sight the bare room seemed empty, but a flash of lightning shattered the dusk for an instant and both boys uttered an exclamation. On a pile of hay in the corner before them lay a man, bound, with a flushed face and eyes that showed no sign of recogntion. It was Dublin, the "pal' of Monkey Rae's father! He screamed curses at them for torturing him and strained at his ropes, finally subsiding in a rumble of oaths.

"He is delirious," said Dick. "If we get him excited, he'll stir the whole place up."

"He made the noises, said Rand, when they were once more in the dark hall.

A shriek rang out beside them, and Dick shivered.

"There's a hole in the wall," announced Rand, bending over. "That's why it sounds so close. He's right beside it."

"It doesn't sound nice even when you know what it is," returned Dick. "There's our other ghost, too." He pointed to the end of the hall, where the faint glow was flickering and fading. Rand advanced boldly upon it.

"It is the end of a rotten beam," he explained, and blew out the light! As soon as the air was still it reappeared. With their ghost accounted for so simply, they felt more at ease and advanced upon the next room more courageously. This room also was empty, but in the middle of the floor lay the tools which had prompted their search and which they had almost forgotten.

"Monkey must be somewhere around here," exclaimed Dick, glancing uneasily over his shoulder.

"I think he would have been with his pal, if he were," returned Rand. "If he's here we'll find him," he added, grimly.

He armed himself with a wrench while Dick took a heavy chisel and, leaving the rest of the

tools for their return, they mounted the rickety stairs.

One side of the upper floor proved to be an attic. The floor was scattered with shingles and broken boxes and the storm was pouring generously through gaps in the roof. An examination showed nothing more, and they turned their attention to the other side.

In the first room they found tools scattered about, a small furnace, a melting pot and a small but complicated machine.

"I wonder——" began Rand, "counterfeiters!" he cried, interrupting himself.

"Look out!" shouted Dick, and jerked him away from the window.

There was a clang of glass and Rand turned. Dublin, the madness of delirium in his eyes, was climbing over the sill. He sprang past them, and, seizing the machine in his arms, darted to the stairway. He leaped wildly down. There was a crash as the stairs gave way beneath his weight, a cloud of dust and silence below. The boys looked cautiously over the edge of the opening. Dublin lay motionless amid the wreck, his machine across his legs.

"How can we get down?" queried Dick.

"The same way he——"

A brilliant flash behind them with a noise that almost cracked their eardrums interrupted the reply. They turned to find the room afire behind them.

"Now we'll have to get down," exclaimed Dick, feeling to see if his ears were still there.

They ran to a window at the rear of the attic and found the roof of the porch just beneath it.

"We'll have to slide and drop," shouted Rand, and stepped out into the driving rain. He balanced unevenly as he crossed the broken shingles, squatted at the edge and dropped. Dick followed as soon as Rand appeared below. The fall was broken by the thick mud and weeds of the yard.

"Somebody's here!" exclaimed Rand, pointing to the wagon, to which a frightened horse was now harnessed.

"We'll have to get Dublin out, anyway," replied Dick. "We can't leave him to burn no matter what he's done."

They dashed through the doorway into the smokey house and, stumbling through the wreck, found Monkey, alone, trying to drag the man's body to the door.

"Give us a hand here, youse," he gasped, "and don't stand there makin' faces."

Dick and Rand lifted the unconscious man by the head and feet and carried him out to the wagon. By the time he was bestowed on the wet hay which partly filled it, Monkey joined them, staggering under the weight of the machine, which he dumped in beside Dublin.

"Yer stuff I borrowed is in the house," he growled, "and youse better hurry if yer goin' to git it."

The rain had nearly ceased at last, and the old timbers were flaming furiously. The boys rushed into the room where they had left the tools Monkey had "borrowed." It was empty! From without came the galloping of a horse and a wild shout from Monkey, at his success in out-witting them.

"Come on!" snapped Dick, between his teeth. "The road swings around the house. We can catch him at the turn."

Though panting already from their exertions, and with lungs and eyes smarting from the smoke, they dashed desperately through the wet bushes and across a field. As they stumbled into the road, the horse and wagon dashed up. Rand, nerved by his anger, plunged at the horse's head

and swung him aside, where he became wedged between two trees. The sudden stoppage of the wagon flung Monkey into the road, where he landed on all fours. He scrambled to his feet and ran to the horse's head, endeavoring to release the animal. Rand climbed into the wagon, where he found the tools in a small box which he passed to Dick. The wagon swayed beneath his feet as Monkey backed the horse into the road. Rand turned to grasp the reins, when Dick shouted from the road,

"Behind you! Look out!"

Rand glanced over his shoulder. Dublin, delirium shining from his blood-shot eyes, was on his knees with one hand reaching for Rand's shoulder. Rand leaped from the wagon and crashed full into Dick so that both went down. When they had scrambled to their feet the horse was galloping madly down the road, with Dublin standing upright beating the animal furiously, while Monkey swung from a precarious hold on the tail board.

The boys watched the wagon out of sight and then looked at each other enquiringly.

"Well," said Rand, with a grim smile, "Monkey may be a scoundrel, but he can get out of

more kinds of trouble than anyone I ever knew."

"It will get too hot for him yet," replied Dick. "That reminds me, that house must be a pretty hot place by this time."

"I think we had better go back and look at it," suggested Rand. "It may spread to the trees."

They tramped wearily back down the road, the box of tools between them. The flames from the house lighted the latter part of their journey, for dusk was already settling around them. As they approached the house there was a loud cracking of timbers, heralding the collapse of the ancient structure. With a prolonged crash the remaining walls plunged into the cellar, which in a few minutes became a huge bed of coals. The heavy rain had protected the trees though the nearer ones were steaming. The boys cautiously approached the edge of the hole, but the heat quickly beat them back.

"Look here," exclaimed Dick, as they mopped their stinging eyes, "I thought I had something on my mind. We haven't had a thing to eat since the last time."

"I feel that way, too," returned Rand, with a laugh. "Let's go where supper waits."

They lifted the box again between them and turned to go. A sullen boom roared out behind them, while a fountain of sparks shot high in the air. The boys halted in astonishment. Charred pieces of wood fell around them, a heavy object bumped on the grass a few feet away, and something clipped Dick's hatbrim sharply and stuck upright in the ground between his feet. It proved to be a piece of ivory about ten inches long, oval in cross-section and about two inches in diameter. The light was too dim for further examination, so Dick stuck it into his pocket.

"It's a lucky thing that it did not strike on your head," said Rand. "It fell point down."

"I think it would have mixed my brains a little," agreed Dick. "I wonder where it came from."

"Maybe this is a clue," suggested Rand, as he bent over the larger object that fell near them. "Ouch! It's hot."

With a fence-rail they pried it up on edge and the dim light from the fire revealed a heavy, iron-bound trunk cover.

"This must have been in the cellar," exclaimed Dick. "We didn't see anything like it in the house."

"There must have been some explosive in it to make it go up that way," returned Rand.

"I think we have better go off before anything more does," suggested Dick, and, with the box of tools between them they set out across the road.

CHAPTER VII.

BUILDING THE GLIDER.

WHEN Rand and Dick reached the shed they found it dark and unoccupied. Rand locked the door and they took the tools up to the house to dry and oil them so that they should not rust. As they approached the porch they recognized the voices of their brother Scouts and realized that they must have postponed supper to await their return.

"Begorra," came a voice out of the darkness, "Oi'm in favor of houlding a coort-martial on thim for taking away the tools whin we wanted to work."

"In my opeenion," rejoined the cautious Donald, "it would na' be a bad idea to find them fi-r-rst."

"'Deed, honey, we's jest awaitin' to sit on some body's cote-ma'tial," came in Rand's best Southern dialect from behind the last speaker. "Who am de villin?"

"That reminds me," began Dick, but a chorus of greetings drowned his words.

"We were debating whether it would be better to hold a court-martial or a postmortem over you. What happened?" asked Jack.

"We refuse to answer any base slanders until we have had supper," replied Rand.

"At least, tell us where you got the tools," implored Jack, who scented a mystery.

"If you must know," returned Dick, "we stole them out of a wagon. I want some dry clothes before I am cross-examined," and away he went toward home. The others followed, to return after supper and learn the history of the afternoon.

When the Uncas Patrol was once more gathered together after supper, Dick and Rand alternately related their adventures. When they had finished, Dick drew forth the piece of ivory—a small thing but destined to take them all far from their homes.

"Even Rand hasn't had a good look at this," he announced, "it is covered with carvings."

The boys eagerly bent over it, as Dick held it under the light of the lamp.

"Why, they are nothing but scratches," exclaimed Don.

"They are not very well done," admitted Rand, turning it over, "but they are meant to be pictures. The piece must have been broken off a long time ago. The edges are worn quite smooth."

"They look like those Indian pictures we saw up in the Rockies," suggested Jack.

"That's what they are," exclaimed Jack. "They are sign writings."

"Faith, the Indians must have been to the zoo thin, for here's an iliphant," remarked Gerald.

"Looks more like a dog," protested Pepper.

"But dogs don't have tails at both ends," remonstrated Jack.

"I don't know but that you are right," admitted Pepper, with a laugh, "but I have read the tale of a dog, and it was not the tail the dog wags, either."

"Pepper is a wag," ventured Rand, amid a protest of groans.

They set earnestly to work to study out the hieroglyphics, but with discouraging results. At the end of an hour of close examination and argument, they found that they had a half dozen signs on whose meanings they agreed, but which seemed to have no definite relation to each other.

"I think Colonel Snow will know how to work it out," suggested Jack. "He has had some experience among the Indians."

"He's the very man," Dick chimed in as they parted for the night. "We'll show it to him."

During the next few weeks the boys gave all their attention to the construction of their glider, the question of a second being left unsettled, until their success or failure in the contest for the engine was determined. Colonel Snow was out of town for some time on a business trip and the question of the carved ivory was perforce laid aside to await his return.

It was soon discovered that some of the boys could handle the tools more skillfully than others, and these were assigned to parts of the work requiring exactness and care. When it came to a question of shaping pieces to a curve, Jack and Rand combined their reading with experiment, and invented some clay ovens to fit the different parts. In these, the pieces, already cut, were steamed until they were pliable and then tightly lashed to forms made by nailing pieces of board one over another on a heavy plank and chopping and planing the whole to the required curve. After several trials they found it necessary to make

the pattern curves a little deeper than the actual shape demanded, as the shaped parts, when released, straightened a little.

In this way the central section of the machine was finished and made ready for the attachment of the wings. It was no easy task, for every part must fit accurately or present a point of weakness. Every exposed surface was sandpapered to glossy smoothness to reduce air-friction.

When the work had reached this stage, the boys gathered one morning to begin the construction of the planes. The long spars, shaped to an edge at the front, were ready and the ribs and uprights were to be the day's task.

"According to the plans," announced Pepper, who was studying them, "the uprights must come to an edge at the front and back, and bulge out in the middle thicker than at the ends. They are so narrow anyway, I should think it would not make much difference. It takes a lot of time, too."

"It does make a lot of difference, though," said a voice from the doorway. "All those points have been settled by experiment."

The boys were too surprised to move for a

moment, then Rand advanced to welcome the visitor.

"We are glad to see you, Mr. Kennedy," was his greeting. "Would you like to see our work?"

"I came down here on business," returned the aviator, "and hearing that you were at work, I thought you might need some criticism. I am rather interested, as Mr. Whilden told me you had entered the gliding contest for his prize motor. Naturally, I would like to see your machine win as you are building it on my model."

"Do you know Mr. Whilden?" asked Jack, always on the lookout for news.

"Yes, we have been discussing the use of his motor on my machine. He spoke of you when he referred to the advertising we might both obtain from the contest. He was coming over to see you himself, but asked me to come in his place."

"We have been expecting Mr. Whilden, and certainly appreciate your interest," responded Jack.

Pepper then showed him over the finished work which he examined closely. He was pleased with the careful finish which had been given every part. The firm elasticity of the skids and their solid fastenings were especially important, he pointed out, as they must bear all the shock of heavy

landing or of starting on rough ground. In fact they were the main protection of the more delicate parts of the machine.

Then they turned to plans and half-finished materials for the rest of the machine, and Mr. Kennedy became the target for a volley of questions.

"One at a time, please," he laughed, "I can't explain everything at once. Let's take the uprights first. They are rounded to an edge at front and back so as to cut the air smoothly and cause no suction behind. Experiment has shown that resistance varies a great deal with the form and when you consider all the uprights, both front and back, you can make a considerable difference. They are bulged in the center because there is where they are more likely to break.

"Why are the planes curved down in front?" demanded Dick before anyone else could speak.

"That curve deflects the air upward," explained the aviator, "so that the larger part of the plane back of it is left in a partial vacuum which tends to suck the plane upward and so give it more lifting power. Now let me ask a question. What have you planned to use for sockets for your uprights?"

"Don is to get some brass tubing which we can make into sockets. I have read that it is used," said Pepper.

"We can do better than that," suggested the aviator, "I use sockets made of a newly discovered alloy of great strength, and I will furnish them at cost. They are all tested after they are made and you can rely upon them."

"That will be fine!" exclaimed the boys enthusiastically.

"It is to our mutual interest," said Kennedy, "and no thanks are due. I will ship them down this week. Now one suggestion and I must go. Instead of bending your guy wires over the ribs, make each wire separate and lock it at the end in this way," illustrating as he spoke, "then each one can be tightened separately, and if one breaks the others will still be firm to bear the extra strain."

"Thank you very much for your advice," said Rand, "we shall certainly use it."

"I will be present at the contest," announced Mr. Kennedy, "and when your plane is finished, don't forget that 'practice makes perfect' in gliding as in everything else." He shook hands all around and hurried away.

Another week saw the planes fairly finished and the boys were at the difficult task of fitting the rubberized cloth over the carefully curved ribs. The latter were made double, one below another, perhaps three inches apart at the point of greatest separation. At this point metal straps connected, each pair forming a truss of great strength. In placing the covering, the cloth was first nailed over the front. Then it was drawn over the ribs and weights suspended from it as it hung down in the back. This was necessary to insure an even tension. The covering was then securely fastened at the back and ends.

The completion of the machine was in sight and the boys worked every possible moment. The elevating and lateral rudders were placed, the ropes run and the wheel shaped, set in and connected. The ailerons, or wing flaps for balancing, were shaped and joined to the wheel, the seat was put in and the fixed forward plane set in between the skids.

In spite of the speed with which they were worked, every part was carefully finished and joined. Don, the cautious Scot, appointed himself Inspector-General and examined, tested and criticised everything that was done.

When the last end of the last wire had been fastened, the boys sent up three echoing cheers that nearly made an aeroplane of the roof.

"Can't we varnish her now?" asked Dick, who was already flying on the wings of the wind, in imagination.

"Not until she's been inspected," replied Pepper firmly. "Mr. Kennedy said he would drop in this afternoon and tell us if there were any changes necessary."

"Faith, Oi'm thinkin' we could give him some points," remarked Gerald, proudly surveying their handiwork.

"I'm always ready to learn," said Mr. Kennedy, appearing as suddenly as before.

"She's all ready for you," announced Pepper, shaking hands. "If you find anything wrong Gerald will die of a broken heart. He is nearly convinced that he built her all by himself."

"Oh, I have something to show for it," exclaimed Gerald, indignantly, holding up a bruised thumb. "Begorra, if you see anything prettier than those guy wires are braced, I'll turn to mending umbrellas."

Mr. Kennedy laughed and rapped three or four of the wires with his knuckles. There was scarce-

ly a difference in the tone, showing that they were practically at the same tension.

He seemed pleased and fell to examining the spars, the fastening of the ribs, the run of the rudder ropes, the easy movement of the rudders and the thousand and one details that go to make an aeroplane a safe, reliable and scientific machine.

At the end of half an hour, he crawled from beneath the lower planes and turned to the boys with hand outstretched.

"I want to congratulate you all," he exclaimed, "and I haven't a single suggestion to offer. You have not been afraid of work, and as a result, have as good a machine as my own shop could turn out. Put on your varnish."

A tumult of cheers, thanks and questions overwhelmed him, until Gerald's voice rose above the racket, crying out, "Can't we try her now?"

"Certainly," returned the aviator with a laugh, "she'll go without the varnish."

In a twinkling six energetic shoulders had lifted her from the ground and borne her out through the open end of the shed into the sunlight. She looked very business-like as they car-

ried her along and the boys felt a thrill of pride at the sight.

Long ago they had settled on a place for their practice, and they placed the machine on the brow of a steep hill, two hundred yards from the shed. The flanks of the declivity were covered with short grass and up its slope a stiff breeze blew steadily. The boys waited while the aviator's keen eye swept the meadow below them. He found no obstructions and turned back to the boys.

"It's after you, Mr. Kennedy," said Gerald, in response to his questioning glance.

The aviator looked over the machine again and climbed into the seat.

"Slide her gently forward till she tilts and then let her go," he directed.

The boys lined up behind the machine and slid it forward. The bow dipped and she slipped steadily away from them. Down, down she rushed, faster and faster. Suddenly the rudders flickered and the next instant the machine was floating out over the meadow as lightly as a bird. The boys sent up a shout that roused the echoes for half a mile, then watched the machine in silent excitement. She moved slower and slower but

did not drop and they suddenly realized that she was rising.

"It's the wind; don't you feel it picking up?" cried Rand. He was right. Under the freshening breeze and the skillful control of Kennedy, the glider was rising and slowly drifting backward toward them. At the end of three and a half minutes she hovered lightly over the brow of the hill and settled on the very spot from which she had started.

"She loves the work," exclaimed Kennedy, enthusiastically, as he climbed down amid admiring cheers.

"She was just dreaming out there," said Gerald, joyously. "Ye should have seen her."

"You can't expect her to often come home like that," said Kennedy, when he could be heard. "With lots of practice and a wind that's just right you can sometimes do it. But you must try to keep her steady and try for easy landings, until you get the hang of it. Don't lift her too soon or your skids will drag and always land before you have to."

The boys drew lots and Gerald first shot down the slope into the air for a few seconds, and onto the smooth meadow. Each time the machine was

dragged up the gentle slope at the side of the hill and sent down again. Mr. Kennedy showed them their errors, made suggestions and keenly watched each glide. When each had had a turn they bore the machine back to the shed and set to work on the first coat of varnish, each looking forward to the time when the rhythm of a motor should speed his flight to any distance he desired.

CHAPTER VIII.

OFF TO THE MEET.

THE art of gliding proved so fascinating that the boys became more impatient than ever to handle a power-driven machine. This desire became so strong that they decided to build the second machine at once, install a motor and trust to the future for a second motor, if they failed to win the gliding contest. They obtained their materials and set to work, their previous experience enabling them to work much more rapidly.

In the meantime they arranged that some one was always practising with the machine. The difficulty of dragging it back to the top of the hill was overcome by the use of a pony belonging to Jack. Every flight was carefully watched and criticized. Every new difficulty was related by the driver of the machine, and the methods of overcoming it thoroughly discussed. Thus, all benefitted by each one's experience. Their accidents were few and trivial. Don had met a sud-

den shift of wind and damaged a wing tip. Several times the machine had dropped a short distance when the wind fell off for a moment, and snapped a guy wire, but the strongly trussed skids took no harm. Gerald, in the longest glide they had made, damaged the rudder on a shrub which they had thought was far enough away to be harmless. These repairs were quickly made and in such a way as to make the machine as strong as ever. Each of the boys had spent some time handling the wheel on the ground, so that they were accustomed to its use before they went into the air.

As the contest drew near, the boys held a tournament of their own to determine who should represent them in the trials. Gerald and Dick had become especially proficient and it was generally acknowledged that the choice lay between these two. The day was bright and clear and a brisk breeze was blowing directly up the slope of the hill. Rand went away first, making a good glide and landing cleanly and with hardly a jar. A strip of cloth was left to mark his landing place and Don set forth. The breeze slackened a little, left him short of Rand's mark by a score of feet. Jack, trying to rise too soon, hampered himself

and barely reached Don's mark. Pepper, accurately gauging his speed, passed Rand's mark a dozen feet. Then Dick climbed into the seat and, after feeling the wind a moment, flung up his hand. The machine started down the hill, rose lightly and swung gracefully across the meadow. Slowly descending he passed Rand's mark, then Pepper's, and landed just where the shrub had been on which Gerald formerly came to grief. He got a mighty cheer from the boys and everyone was eager to see if Gerald could better the record.

The machine in place once more, Gerald climbed to the seat and without hesitation, flung up his hand. Down the hill he shot, the rudders flickered and in a moment he was gliding out across the field. He had nearly reached Rand's mark, though at a good height, when the wind dropped suddenly. Instantly the rudders swung, the machine tilted forward and shot toward the ground with rapidly increasing speed. When barely six feet above the grass the breeze stiffened and he swung the glider back to a level position. The speed he had gained in his swoop was sufficient to lift him on the strengthening wind and he rose slowly. Then he glided evenly to the ground, a

clear twenty-five feet beyond the mark set by Dick. It was a masterly feat and worthy of the most experienced aviator. His distance was three hundred and fifty feet from a hill barely thirty feet high. His work raised the boys' hopes to the highest plane so far as the coming contest was concerned, and left no doubt that he would represent them in that event. As they had always done, they went over every part of the machine, for Kennedy's injunction to them had been: "If you don't inspect before and after every trip you are taking a chance," and they had kept that warning carefully in mind.

"I have an idea," exclaimed Pepper as they finished the examination.

"Tell us all about it," encouraged Jack, assuming an attitude of the most intense interest.

"Let's take our motorcycles"——

"They won't let you glide on a motorcycle," interrupted Gerald.

"Don't be so flighty," retorted Pepper, "I haven't finished yet. If we take two of our motorcycles and lash them under the plane we can tow it over with the others and save ourselves the trouble of taking it apart and the cost of shipping. Don't you think that is a good idea, Don?"

"Well," said the canny Scot, "it is no so bad unless there is a better one."

There was a laugh at this characteristic reply. Two of the motorcycles were soon obtained and the boys set about building a framework between them. "Here, let me help," demanded Gerald, swinging a hammer energetically.

"No," returned Rand. "We can't have you spoiling your pretty fingers; you must save them for the contest and you always hit your thumb before you hit a nail."

"That reminds me"—— began Dick.

" 'Tis a base insult," Gerald broke in. "Sure I can drive a nail harder than any of you."

"Yes,—a finger-nail," put in Rand, and Gerald was drowned out by the laughter which followed the shot.

The machines lashed to the framework, the motors were disconnected and the plane was mounted on the wheels so as to travel endwise. This was necessary on account of the narrowness of the roads in places over which they must travel.

Two days later they set out on their trip, two of the boys riding in the plane while the others rode ahead towing it. They started early in the morning in order to have time to inspect the ma-

chine thoroughly before the contest. The horses of more than one farmer along the road received the surprise of their lives when they met the strange-looking procession.

Mr. Whilden had selected a smooth meadow at the foot of a steep hill about fifty feet high as the best place for the contest. Half a dozen machines, some of known and some of strange makes, were scattered about the field. The sun shown clear and a strengthening breeze blew fitfully.

By noon the machines were ready for the contest, but the Uncas Patrol had not yet arrived. The Whildens were a little worried by the non-appearance of the boys and discussed it as they sat at lunch.

"You don't suppose anything has happened to them, do you?" questioned Nellie, anxiously.

"They are propably having a hand-to-hand struggle with Monkey Rae and his family," suggested Frank, scoffingly. "Those chaps are always getting into trouble."

"Well, they always get out again all right," replied Nellie, with spirit.

"That's because they have Pepper Blake with them," retorted Frank, with mischievous intent.

"He isn't afraid of anything," insisted Nellie,

blushing, and she attacked her lunch vigorously to hide her confusion.

"They certainly have a wonderful faculty of coming out of difficulties right end up," remarked Mr. Whilden, aiming to cover Nellie's evident embarrassment at her brother's jibe, "but in this case they are probably aiming to make a dramatic entrance at the last moment."

"I hope they will arrive all right," said Frank, "because I want to see them win that motor. They have certainly worked hard from what I have heard."

"They certainly have," replied Mr. Whilden, as they started for the field, "and their machine is a beautiful piece of work. They will have to meet some skillful men, though, and a great deal depends on the handling of the machine."

"I'll trust them to come out all right," returned Frank, enthusiastically. "They don't grudge hard work in anything they undertake. I wish they were here, though," he added, anxiously looking around.

The boys had not arrived, however, when the contest started, promptly at two o'clock. The wind had steadied to a stiff breeze blowing directly up the hill, the most favorable possible di-

rection. The contestants were assigned their starting numbers from a drawing made by the judges. The first machine, a triplane with strange, drooping wings, shot down the hill, leaped into the air and swayed dangerously out over the course. It steadied for a moment and then swung in a half-circle and up-ended. Machine and driver plunged twenty feet to the ground amid the cries of the crowd. The attendants rushed forward, but the man was already free of the wreck and shook his fist at it as they gained his side.

"Why, you old wreck," he shouted, "what d'ye mean actin' that-a-way? I never learnt ye that."

Many people had assembled and the crowd, relieved to find that the aviator was unhurt, gave vent to its feelings in a mighty roar of laughter as he berated the senseless mass of tangled spars and wires.

"I treated her careful as a baby," said the would-be airman in a grieved tone, turning to the attendants, "and now she acts like this. Handle her easy," he begged, as a team of horses was attached to the wreck, "she's the only one I've got."

Again the crowd of spectators roared and the disgruntled competitor pulled a monkey wrench

from his pocket, shook it at the derisive ones and slowly followed his machine to a corner of the field, while the contest went on.

In the meantime the boys, with their machine in tow, made steady progress until they were about half way to their destination. Then, above the sound of their motorcycles, for quite some time they heard the horn of an impatient automobile behind them. Not until they had travelled a considerable distance could they draw aside at a turn in the road, and halt.

An ancient car wheezing furiously, rattled up and the driver stopped beside them with an outburst of profanity. He demanded to know what they meant by blocking the road with a scow on wheels and threatened them with dire things when he saw they were boys. In the midst of his tirade the motor of his car gave a long drawn wheeze and stopped, and the driver added another burst of profanity to his adjurations.

The boys, blocked in by the car, were unable to go on and the man tinkered with his engine to no purpose.

"If you will move your car out of the way we can go on," suggested Rand.

"My car will stay where it is," snarled the man

over his shoulder. "I've as good a right to block the road as you have, and what's more I'll do it. You can wait for me now."

"That's not fair," exclaimed Rand angrily. "We got out of your way as soon as we could."

It began to look as if matters would become serious, and that a long delay would upset all their plans. While the others were arguing, however, Pepper had been looking over the engine and discovering what was at fault promptly adjusted the part and announced the fact. The irate owner had now no other course than to move on, which he did, but in no gracious mood.

One other incident was to cause some delay. In making a rather sharp turn, Pepper's wheel was upset and his head in the tumble came in all too solid contact with a stone. A black eye was resultant.

"Oh, Nellie will not mind that," said Rand with a smile. "Its a badge of courage."

"Never mind the eye," retorted Pepper, blushing, "let's get started."

The tow ropes were again adjusted and the journey continued.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CONTEST.

"I DO hope they will come soon," said Nellie for the fiftieth time. "They will be too late if they do not put in an appearance quickly."

"They will be all ready when they arrive," said Mr. Whilden, reassuringly, although he kept one eye on the road.

"Have they been told of the rules?" asked Frank.

"Yes, I wrote them out for them," returned Mr. Whilden. One glide, to be scored on distance, control and landing, one point for each. If Gerald does as well here as on their own course, he has only two men to fear. The others are chiefly inventors."

"You mean Haymond and Herrick," said Frank. "I think Gerald has a fair chance against them. Mr. Kennedy says he is a born aviator."

The fourth machine had just swung out over the course when Nellie's quick ear caught the "put-put-put" of a number of motor cycles.

"Here they come," she cried, delightedly.

"About time," returned Frank, in a relieved tone.

The spectators craned their necks to view the odd procession that rolled across the field. At one side the boys dismounted, removed the tow-ropes and stacked their cycles together. In a moment they were swarming over the glider, each testing certain parts that had been assigned to him. Nuts were tightened, braces looked after and every connection between wheel and rudders examined, to make certain that they moved freely. The business-like appearance of the young fellows in their neat uniforms caught the admiration of the crowd, and there was a hum of approval from the throng that soon surrounded them. Foremost among these were the Whildens, who greeted the boys warmly.

"I was afraid you had met with some accident," said Nellie, "and I'm awfully glad you are here in time."

"If it had been anyone else," Frank put in, "we should have started out a rescue party, but we knew you would get out of any scrape you might happen to fall into, all right. What was it this time?"

Jack rapidly related their adventure by the wayside, while Pepper lingered coyly in the shadow of the 'plane, trying to keep the discolored eye in the background. It came somewhat into evidence, however, when Jack vividly described in semi-heroic terms how Pepper took a header from his motorcycle, but despite his hurt came up smiling. When reference was made to the Scout's ingenious adjustment of the difficulty with the engine of the motor car which had temporarily barred their progress, Nellie voiced her admiration.

"I think that was fine," she cried, turning to Pepper, whereupon that young man turned a bright red and, barely acknowledging her congratulations, dived under the machine in a most assiduous search for something to arrange—anything, so long as it served to keep the damaged optic out of sight.

"NUMBER SEVEN," came a roar from the official megaphone at the top of the hill.

"That is the number assigned you," cried Frank; "I forgot to tell you. Here is the team to tow your 'plane up."

The young Scouts and their hosts climbed the long side slope together, their machine moving

just ahead. Gerald, who was feeling a little shaky, although he responded cheerfully to the encouragement of his chums, gazed anxiously at the broad meadow below him as he reached the top of the hill. It seemed to him that the marks left by the previous competitors were a long distance away and for a moment his heart sank. He climbed slowly to the seat as the 'plane was placed in position and the grip of the wheel seemed to act as a tonic. His eye took in a long, perfect slope before him, as, instinctively, he gauged the strength and steadiness of the wind. Then all his confidence returned and he was only anxious to speed away across the level field.

"Whenever you're ready," sounded a singsong voice behind him. He raised his hand in signal, the machine stirred, started forward, tipped at the brow of the hill, then took the air and swooped away in a long, easy glide.

Under the control of his practised hand she rose smoothly and he could hear a loud murmur of applause behind him as she steadied to the glide. Gerald passed high over the first two marks. The third and fourth were some fifty feet to the right, and these he passed also. The last mark seemed to drift slowly toward him. He set his teeth and

determined to beat it. It seemed, however, that he must be brushing the grass in the meadow, when it vanished beneath his skids. An instant later he touched the earth, steadied his planes, and stopped—a perfect landing.

A cheer thundered across the field and the field judges ran toward him waving their hats. He climbed down anxiously in time to see them laying a tape across the grass.

"Fine," exclaimed one, looking up. "You have twelve feet clear and a perfect score. One of the two best men here set that mark. You've heard of Raymond, of course."

The other boys came racing across the meadow and pounded Gerald on the back in congratulation. Then at a word from Rand their bugles went to their lips and the Scout salute rang out across the field.

"D-d-do you t-t-think we'll g-g-get the motor?" stammered Pepper, slapping Don on the shoulder.

"Weel, in my opeenion, it would no be a bad idea to wait till the others try before saying," replied the young Scot, as they moved the 'plane off the course.

"You're a fine encourager," said Rand. "If we

don't win the motor we'll dump you in the river as a hoodoo."

The boys grouped themselves about their machine, keenly watching each contestant as he came down. Number eight steered wildly to the right and landed short, far off the course. Number nine glided steadily, but it was too heavily built and landed a poor third. Number ten was a freak machine, but, to the surprise of all, dropped lightly to earth but six feet behind Gerald's mark. For a moment, after this flight the boys were badly worried. Number eleven never left the ground, but slid to the bottom of the hill, while the driver wrestled with a tangle of rudder lines. Number twelve landed far short of their mark and the boys breathed more freely. Only one machine to come and their glide was unbeaten.

Nearly six hundred feet away and fifty feet in the air, number thirteen started on its glide. It rose without a tremor. Gerald's eyes were riveted on the rapidly growing figure of the driver as the machine approached. Half way down the course it rocked in a gust, but the ready hands at the wheel steadied it instantly.

"Fine," murmured Gerald, as he noted the skillful maneuvering. Slowly the machine descend-

ed—past the third mark—past the second, almost brushing the ground—over the first? No, exactly on it. The judges bent to their tape; consulted; measured again and turned to the driver.

"Not an inch difference; it's a perfect tie. We'll have to see Mr. Whilden."

Herrick stopped to shake hands with Gerald.

"We're both in the same boat, it seems," he said, with a laugh. "I hope they'll let us try it over."

"Begorra, they'll have to. They can't give us each half an engine," returned Gerald.

They all climbed the hill together, every one talking and anxious, except Gerald and Herrick, who seemed to have taken an instant liking for each other. The judges conferred with Mr. Whilden and promptly reached a decision.

"I think a retrial is the fairest way," announced Mr. Whilden. "You may as well draw straws to see who is to be first away."

Herrick broke two grass stems, shuffled them in his hand, and held them out to Gerald.

"Short straw goes first," he said.

Gerald drew and got the long one.

"That's fine," exclaimed Dick. "You will have his mark to guide you."

"I'm glad I'm in time to see some of your contest," panted Colonel Snow, who hurried up at that moment. "I couldn't get here for the first of it."

"You're here in time for the cream of the contest," said Rand in greeting. "Mr. Herrick is just about to start; watch him."

CHAPTER X.

BREAKING THE TIE.

AN intensely interested audience now watched the progress of events.

Herrick's machine had been drawn to the top of the hill, and he climbed into the seat. A moment to settle himself and up went his hand. The 'plane tilted and swept down and out across the field in a long, smooth slant. Smaller and smaller it grew in the distance and finally settled to earth at what seemed an incredible distance away for a glider. The boys felt almost hopeless, as they guaged the interval from the hill. One of the judges signalled and the announcer lifted his megaphone:

"Number thirteen makes six hundred and thirteen feet," he roared.

Thirty-eight feet better than the previous mark! The prospect seemed hopeless and, for a moment, Gerald was cast down.

Once more in the machine, however, he was

gratified to find that the wind had strengthened and his hopes were again aroused.

On his signal the 'plane shot away, but hardly had it left the ground when a gust of wind tilted one end. The boys groaned, then cheered as Gerald brought the machine back to a level and in the face of the strong puff of wind, she began to climb. The crowd roared. Ten feet higher than at her starting point, she steadied to the long glide. High over her previous mark, she drifted, nearer and near to the strip of white that marked the finish of Number Thirteen. The crowd yelled again as she passed it, and when she settled far beyond, they broke through the ropes and swarmed upon the field. The judges laid their tape for the last time. The announcer caught their signal, and through the megaphone thundered:

"Number Seven makes seven hundred and seven feet; and a perfect score."

The end of the announcement was drowned in the ringing Scouts' salute and the cheers of the little party on the hill.

Herrick was the first to congratulate Gerald and he did it with much enthusiasm.

"That was a great glide," he exclaimed, pump-

ing Gerald's hand. "I thought that gust had you at one time, but when you began to climb on it I knew you were as safe as a house and that you had me beat."

"Faith, it was simply because I was lucky enough to get the stronger wind, instead of you," returned Gerald, somewhat embarrassed.

"Gusts of that kind are not usually lucky," said Herrick. "I had rather do without them, because they mean trouble if you don't meet them right."

By this time the crowd had surrounded them and Gerald's hand was all but shaken off by the well-wishers of the Boy Scouts. He was relieved by his chums who opened a way for him through the throng. They closed about him—swung him to their shoulders, and headed for the top of the hill. Here they set him down before Mr. Whilden, about whom were clustered the judges and several of the contestants. Again the young aviator became the center of a series of embarrassing congratulations.

"Say something for the honor of the Patrol," urged Rand, at his shoulder.

"I can't," returned Gerald, suddenly stricken with stage-fright. "Let Jack do the talking.

Sure he knows all about spaches, from his father's paper."

"Never," exclaimed Jack. "If you did not want to make a speech you should not have won. I can only write."

"Thin here goes, and the blame be wid you," said Gerald, desperately. "Gintlemin, I can steer a machine better than I can me own tongue, which is always getting me into throuble, but I want to thank you for your kind remarks and if you have any more to make, please take thim out in three cheers for the Uncas Patrol, which is the boys that made the machine that could do it."

Rendered breathless by this effort at oratory, the speaker dived behind his fellows, while the crowd furnished lustily the cheers he had called for.

"We must start along, boys," said Mr. Whilden, "if we are to be in time for dinner. I am saving my congratulations till a little later, when I shall have an opportunity to talk."

The motor cycles and the 'plane were cared for by the field attendants, leaving the boys free to walk over with their host. Mrs. Whilden and the girls had gone on ahead, to carry out certain

proposed plans in the event of the hoped-for victory.

"That eye of yours seems to be less annoying than it was," remarked Jack to Pepper, with a wink at the other boys.

"No, I hardly feel it now," returned Pepper, innocently.

" 'Deed, chile, Ah knowed it would heal right up after Miss Nellie done look it ovah," grinned Rand in his softest Southern accent.

"It's no such thing," protested Pepper, while the tan around the damaged eye deepened to a furious red.

"Do you mean that her sympathy didn't help it any?" queried Dick. "That isn't complimentary, to say the least."

"I don't believe she even saw it," exploded the badgered Pepper.

"And she did not, its my opeenion, she's color blind," suggested Donald.

The bothered young man turned upon him with real Pepperian war gleaming in both optics, but Rand intervened.

"You can't deny that it does look a good deal like a rainbow so far as shades and tints are concerned, Pepper," he commented, "but Miss Nel-

lie was probably too polite to take any notice of it. A few days will modify the difference in tones between it and your regular complexion, and then you can pay her a visit and show her how you really look."

The tormented Pepper was by this time almost beyond the influence of arbitration, but the timely arrival at the Whilden mansion and the diversion of soap and clean towels attracted his persecutors and he escaped, for the time being.

The boys had just time to remove the dust of the road and the aviation field when the welcome gong boomed out the call for which their anxious appetites were waiting.

CHAPTER XI.

THE NARWHAL'S TUSK.

WHEN the boys entered the dining room they were pleased to find that Colonel Snow was to be one of the party. Every one was in high, good humor over the outcome of the contest and Gerald was the hero of the hour. Yet, somehow, Pepper seemed more pleased with his seat at Nellie's left than he would have been with Gerald's place at Mr. Whilden's right hand.

As appetites were appeased, conversation became brisker and gradually turned to the building of their glider.

"The second machine is nearly finished," said Rand, in reply to a question, "and now that we are to have two motors, thanks to Gerald, we hope soon to have both the machines in the air under power."

"We made much better progress on the second 'plane," added Jack. "Our experience with the

first helped a lot. There is a great deal in getting acquainted with your tools."

"Faith," interjected Gerald, "Oi think it was the tools getting used to us. That saw used to buck ivery toime Oi laid a hand on it."

"Now I wonder whether you would call that a saw-buck or a buck-saw?" queried Dick. "I always thought it was a rip-saw."

"Horrible," ejaculated Rand. "I hope, Mrs. Whilden, you will excuse him," he added, turning to his hostess. "He can't help it; it seems to come natural to him."

"I think we will let him off this time," laughed Mrs. Whilden. "If you boys can't cure him of punning, I am afraid my penalties would have little effect."

"I'll be good," cried Dick, in pretended alarm. "If I can make one more remark I will be quiet for the rest of the evening."

"If you are very careful," returned Rand with mock sternness, "you can make one short remark."

"It's only this," said Dick, diving into his pocket. "As Colonel Snow is here, I thought we might ask him about it."

He produced the piece of ivory which he and

Rand had brought back, after their adventure in the old house, and passed it to Mrs. Whilden.

"Why, how odd," she exclaimed, examining it. "It is scratched over with figures. Have they any meaning?"

"That is what we want to find out, and we thought Colonel Snow might be able to decipher them. We found it in rather an odd way," replied Rand.

"Tell us about it," said Mrs. Whilden. "Such an oddity ought to involve an odd and unusual story."

"I suppose you were in some kind of a scrape, as usual," suggested Frank.

"Well," admitted Rand, hesitatingly. "We had a little trouble just before, but"——

A chorus of laughter ran around the table and interrupted this justification of Frank's guess.

"You might as well tell us about it," urged Frank. "The story goes with the ivory."

"It was nothing much," explained Rand, reluctantly, "somebody stole our tools and we had some trouble getting them back. While we were returning from the search, we accidentally discovered this souvenir."

"Begorra, that's not right at all," exclaimed

Gerald, glad to talk of something besides the contest. "Dick and Rand went to the workshop, after lunch, and found the tools missing. By skillful work they trailed the villain into a patch of woods. Thin they bouldly followed him into an ould house, whin it began to rain as niver before, with thunder and lightning. There was wan ghost they saw and wan they heard and they wint and found a crazy man tied up with ropes to kape thim company. And whin the house caught fire from lightning, they had to jump off the roof. Thin they got the tools back and the house blew up from a thrunk in the cellar. Whin the pieces began to come down this piece of ivory hit Dick on the hat. That's all there was too it."

"Mercy," exclaimed Mrs. Whilden. "I should think that was a great deal too much. Weren't you hurt in all the excitement?"

"Not at all," replied Dick, "although for a time we were pretty busy."

"They didn't want to do it," explained Jack, "but we didn't want to let anybody steal our property."

"Certainly not," said Mr. Whilden, approvingly. "Though I must say the Uncas Patrol has dis-

covered more kinds of trouble than I am well acquainted with."

"We hope when we have found them all, that they will not trouble us again," returned Gerald.

"You might be fairly safe, now, so far as that is concerned," suggested Frank. "I hope the ivory has a story worthy of the adventure that discovered it."

The curio had passed from hand to hand, around the table, until it reached Colonel Snow, who studied it intently for several minutes. All eyes were on him as he endeavored to solve the puzzle. At last he looked up.

"I think I can tell you something about it, but this sort of sign language requires something more than a superficial examination. This piece was cut from the horn of a narwhal, which is a sea mammal, akin to the whale. It is sometimes called the sea unicorn because of this strange weapon. It has evidently been handled a good deal for the broken or raw edges are worn quite smooth. From its color I should judge it to be quite old. The carvings are unskillfully done; apparently with a knife point."

"The signs, themselves," Colonel Snow continued, "while mainly Indian, are partly Eskimo,

I think. I have seen one or two examples of the latter work, but do not well understand it. The combination of the two would hardly be found outside of Alaska, as the northern part of Canada is little travelled by white men and some of the signs show a white man's work. Our interpretation is based on this, for the first signs could only have come from Alaska or Siberia, and the latter has no Indians.

"The first sign is a mammoth. He differs from the elephant in that his tusks curve into nearly three-quarters of a circle. Of course the modern Indian knows nothing of these animals for they have long been extinct and the signs themselves have only been found on a few prehistoric carvings. I think the mammoth is only introduced to clear what follows. Next comes a pile of tusks and this would seem to indicate that a number of them have been gathered together, somewhere. The number of tusks is not shown, but judging from the size of the pile and the length of a tusk, it must be about twenty. After them comes a cliff with a cave in it. The mouth of the cave is nearly the shape of the ace of clubs in a pack of cards, and is probably chosen as a landmark, from its peculiar form."

The Colonel studied the carvings closely, before continuing, while his audience waited, spellbound with interest, for his next words. Here was a real and fascinating mystery being solved before their eyes.

"There is an arrow pointing from the pile of tusks toward the cave," the Colonel continued, "and I thought at first it indicated the direction from the cave, but since it points the other way, it must mean that the tusks have been concealed in the cave. Following that comes the picture of a man lying down beside an empty sledge, without dogs. Now to be far from supplies, without dogs, in a far Northern winter, means death, so that this shows that the place cannot be reached in winter without great risk. The next sign shows a man shooting a bird, and there are indications of grass at his feet, meaning, probably, that food can be obtained in this way during the summer."

The colonel paused again to study, but shook his head, doubtfully.

"The other signs will take closer investigation," he said. "They are a little too deep. Please understand that the meanings I have given you are the best I can work out, on casual inspection, and they may be entirely wrong. Still, I think

they are fairly accurate. I would like to look into the matter further and see if the rest of it bears out my interpretation."

"Do you suppose the tusks are still there?" inquired Pepper, eagerly.

"I think it is little doubtful," said the Colonel, with a smile. "You see, even if my interpretation were correct, the tusks that are evidently referred to may have been taken away by the man who put the record on the ivory, or by someone who may have seen it; or, they may have been accidentally discovered."

"But if sledges cannot go there, how could the tusks be taken away?" demanded Rand.

"It would be difficult," replied the Colonel, "especially as they weigh some three hundred pounds apiece."

"Begorra, we might get thim after all," exclaimed Gerald.

"Where would you look for them?" asked Jack.

"In Alaska," returned Gerald, surprised.

"Alaska is a little bigger than a back yard," retorted Jack. "It might pay you to find the Ace of Clubs on a map before you start."

Gerald had not considered this point before and felt quite cast down.

"Suppose we go into the library," suggested Mrs. Whilden, "and perhaps we can discover something of it."

"Would these mammoths' tusks be considered valuable, if they were found?" queried Pepper, as they left the table.

"They are not exactly a common article of commerce," returned the Colonel. "In fact, they are very rare, and besides their intrinsic value as ivory, they are eagerly sought for by scientific societies. However, the encyclopedia can furnish you with more substantial information than I, on that point."

The meal concluded, the whole party adjourned to the library, where a full discussion of hidden and lost treasure and their successful rescue occupied their attention.

"I recall to mind the story of William Phips," remarked the Colonel, "and how luck and chance plays so considerable a part in such ventures. Phips, you remember, was searching for a lost Spanish treasure ship, and after many weary days, months even, of unsuccessful effort, when looking over the side of his canoe, he espied far down in the clear water a great waving sea feather of singular beauty growing up out of a rock. His

Indian diver, at his command, plunged down to fetch the feathery sea blossom and found as well a lot of guns; in fact, it was the location of the very ship for which they were looking, and the lost treasure was found close at hand.

Despite close study, they were unable to locate on the maps anything that looked like the ace of clubs and were forced to be satisfied with such information as the encyclopedia furnished regarding Alaska and the mammoth. Gerald, whose enthusiasm had warmed again during the discussion, announced his determination.

"Whin Oi go to Alaska, Oi'll take a look around for this land mark cave. There may be something in it."

"When did you decide to go to Alaska?" demanded Jack.

"A long time ago," replied Gerald, with spirit. "As soon as Oi can, Oi'm going to see America—all of it."

"Would you rather do that than go to Europe?" asked Mr. Whilden, with pretended surprise; "they have mammoths over there, you know."

"Whin Oi've a counthry like this of me own to see, Europe can wait a long toime for me," returned Gerald, with spirit.

"Good for you!" exclaimed Mrs. Whilden. "Don't let him tease you."

"It was hardly a fair question," said Mr. Whilden, with a smile, "but you seemed so interested in the mammoths that I wanted to see if they had anything to do with it."

"Suppose we go out and see something of our own country now," suggested Frank. "Two automobiles will just hold us all, and there is a fine moon tonight."

This plan was hailed with delight, and Frank hurried away to order out the cars. Within a few minutes the machines were purring before the porch and the party climbed into them in a merry mood. The cars rolled out onto the road, Mr. Whilden driving one, and Frank the other, on what proved to be an exciting trip.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CAVE.

THE fine State road stretched away in the moonlight before the cars, apparently as smooth as a table. Jokes and laughter arose above the noise of the motors. Gerald was warned by half a dozen voices to see as much of the country as he could and not bother about the conversation.

"Sure," he retorted gallantly, from his place beside Mrs. Whilden, "whin Oi'm in such good company, why wouldn't Oi be making th' most of it?"

"I think you must have been kissing the blarney stone, Gerald," smiled Mrs. Whilden.

"Indade, no," returned Gerald. "Oi'm just thinking, it's the people in it that make the counthry so fine."

"'Deed, chile, we-all thought it was the mammoth's tusks," said Rand, teasingly.

"I will give you a chance to look for some,"

suggested Frank. "There's an old road that branches off, just ahead, with some caves beside it. Suppose we go and look. We run into this road again a mile and a half farther on."

Suiting the action to the word, he turned the car off onto the country road, where the great trees met above their heads. The other car, in advance, had continued on the State road, but could not get very far ahead before the second should follow.

At the end of half a mile, a rocky ridge came into view, thirty or forty feet back from the road. The trees disappeared and, as Frank slowed the car, they could see the openings of several caverns in the face of the rock.

"An old hermit used to live up there," said Frank, pointing to one cave mouth about ten feet from the ground. "Some of his house-furnishings are still there, so you can get a pretty good idea of how a hermit lives, if you want to explore."

The suggestion was received with approval and the car drew up at the side of the road.

"I didn't know that hermits had any house-furnishings," said Jack, as everybody climbed out of the car.

"This one had," replied Frank, leading the way to the foot of the cliff, "but perhaps he was not a regular hermit. I have not seen any others."

"Speaking of hermits reminds me——" began Dick.

"Don't spoil a beautiful night like this," Rand interrupted.

"Oh, let him tell it," said Jack. "If it is not a good story we can leave him in the hermit's cave."

"Well, it's a pretty old story," said Dick doubtfully, as they gathered around him.

"I will not let them leave you in the cave," said Mrs. Whilden. "If they don't care to listen, you may tell it to me."

"A man who had never seen a hermit," began Dick, hurriedly, fearing his audience might leave, "found an old German anchorite in a cave one day, and asked him who he was. 'I vas a here-mit,' replied the German. 'Why are you called that?' inquired the man. 'Pecause I live here-mit nopuddy,' replied the German."

"I think that was a very good reason," laughed Mrs. Whilden.

"Please don't encourage him," begged Rand. "He's bad enough as it is. He ought to be ashamed to look a hermit in the face, after that."

"This way up!" called Frank, from the foot of the cliff.

They found a projecting shelf of bare rock about eighteen inches wide leading up from the ground at a gentle slope to the mouth of the cave. Frank led the way and climbed through the entrance, which was barely four feet high. A short distance within, however the roof rose to a height of nearly ten feet. The cave itself was nearly fifteen feet wide. Frank carried one of the oil lamps from the automobile, and by its light they could distinguish a number of objects scattered about the floor.

"I don't see any mammoth's tusks," said Rand, poking about in a nearby corner.

"Here is a table," called Dick from one side of the cave, "but it is only a foot high."

"He must have sat on the floor, tailor fashion," suggested Rand, turning it over. "Hello! here is a paper nailed on the other side."

Frank threw the light on their discovery, which appeared to be a small folded square of paper, fastened to the underside of the table with carpet tacks. Rand produced a knife, with which he pried the tack from its place. The paper, when

unfolded, disclosed some straggling and poorly formed characters.

"Can you read it?" asked Frank, peering over Rand's shoulder.

"It is not very legible," replied Rand, "but it says something about 'dig in the South, by the sunless hearth.' It doesn't seem to make much sense."

"Suppose we take it with us," suggested Gerald, who had been poking around the far corners. "There doesn't seem to be much else here, except some broken shelves."

"Wait a minute," exclaimed Rand. "I have it now:

> "'Dig in the South, by the sunless hearth,
> Where treasures lie that outweigh the earth.'"

"It sounds crazy to me," commented Dick. "Do you suppose he knew what he meant?"

"He must have had a hearth," suggested Frank, "and of course it was sunless if it was in here."

"It could not be in here without chimney," offered Jack. "He would have been smoked out."

"That's a good suggestion," exclaimed Frank, throwing the light of the lamp he carried up to the roof, where it flickered for a moment and then settled in one corner.

"There's a hole," called out Jack, joining in the rush toward that section of the cave.

"This is the fireplace, all right," said Rand. "See the smoky walls."

"Here is the hearth-stone," Jack added, swinging a thin slab of stone to one side.

To their surprise there was a hole filled with earth in the stone floor of the cave underneath the slab.

"It may have been worn by the water coming down the chimney," suggested Rand.

"I shall sit on the table and count the treasure as you draw it up;" said Mrs. Whilden, smiling at their interest.

"It is probably some kind of a joke," said Dick, prying into the earth with a stick. He scraped away in the soft loam until he reached a depth of six or eight inches.

"If it doesn't come out the next try, I shall consider it a bad joke," he said, driving the stick down with considerable force.

"Hurrah! Here's something," cried Frank,

"That's all there is," said Dick. "The hole runs 'way down." He dropped the stick, and they heard it apparently thirty or forty feet below them.

"There is something written here," exclaimed Frank, turning the board over in the light of the lamp. "I have it:

"'Who Digs, Gains Health and Length of Days,
And either one the World outweighs.'"

"That is a fine kind of a joke," said Dick. "I suppose he thought he was funny."

"There is a good moral in it," laughed Mrs. Whilden. "The man who works hard is usually the better for it."

"Who ever saw a hermit work?" demanded Dick. "They just 'hermit' for a living, don't they?"

"I suppose you might put it that way," replied Mrs. Whilden, with a smile at Dick's chagrin, "but some of them thought a great deal about right and wrong things to do."

"Well, I don't think much of funny hermits," growled the disappointed boy, as they emerged from the cave.

"The car is gone!" cried Frank, stopping midway in the path.

Sure enough, there was no automobile in sight.

"It's a good five miles back to the house," he announced, with some dismay, as he gazed up and down the road, unwilling to believe his eyes.

"I think the other car will come back this way, when they find we have not followed them," suggested Mrs. Whilden.

A careful examination of the soft earth of the road showed that the machine had gone straight ahead. The thieves, or jokers, whichever it might prove to be, had evidently desired to disappear as soon as possible and had made no effort to turn the car.

Having made a close inspection of the surroundings, the marooned travellers gathered in the road to discuss their best course. They finally resolved to await the return of the other car, which might be expected soon.

"At least, Gerald will have time enough to see this part of the country," suggested Jack, and with this happy thought they sat down on a convenient ledge to await their rescue.

In the meantime, the car driven by Mr. Whilden had gone on past the point where the old road turned in again. Don looked back several times during the next two or three miles, but saw nothing of the missing car.

"In my opeenion," he said at last, "the other car is no so fast as this."

"Frank usually drives faster than I do," re-

turned Mr. Whilden, "but they may have stopped for something."

"Perhaps we had better go back and see," suggested Nellie. "They may have had a breakdown."

Mr. Whilden stopped the car and turned it around. Just as he started again, Pepper sprang up with a cry.

"Here they come," he exclaimed, "and they are not going slowly, either."

"I never saw Frank drive like that," said Mr. Whilden, as the swaying car tore down the road toward them.

"It's another car," said Pepper. "There are only two persons in it."

Like a flash the car tore past them in a cloud of dust. Mr. Whilden turned and shouted, "That's our car!" He would have followed in pursuit, but Nellie caught his arm.

"Maybe they are hurt," she said. "Can't we find them first?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Whilden. "The car has been stolen, and the police can catch those fellows."

Mr. Whilden, prompted by the trail, turned his car off into the old road when they reached it,

and everyone kept a sharp lookout for the missing party, and their watchfulness was soon rewarded.

"There they are!" cried Pepper, as they came in sight of the cliff caves.

There was a chorus of exclamations, questions and answers as Mr. Whilden brought the car to a stop beside the abandoned excursionists. When the situation had been explained, there seemed but one course to pursue.

"I shall take one-half of the party back to the house," decided Mr. Whilden. "Then Frank can return for the rest, while I notify the police of our loss."

Pepper and Gerald yielded their places to Mrs. Whilden and Frank, and Mr. Wilden started the car.

"Don't let the hermits get you," called Frank, over his shoulder.

"Not if we see them first," shouted Dick, in reply.

"I feel thirsty," announced Jack, after the others had gone. "That hermit must have found water somewhere near here."

"There may be a spring up there in the rocks," suggested Rand.

The boys climbed to the foot of the cliff, and

moved slowly along in its shadow, listening for sounds of water. They had gone but two hundred feet when the hum of an automobile motor caught their ears.

The car came into view, in the moonlit road, and slowed to a stop before the cave. There were two men in it.

"Don't move," said Rand, softly. "They can't see us."

The occupants of the car were arguing, but the boys could catch nothing of their conversation.

The dispute was settled shortly, and the driver backed the car across the road, turned it, and started slowly back in the direction whence it had come. A hundred yards down the road he turned off, and the boys could hear the snapping of branches as it disappeared under the trees. In a few minutes the sound of the engine ceased, and the two men appeared, walking up the road. As they came in front of the cave, they turned toward it, apparently well aware of its location, and their conversation became audible.

"I tell you that ain't no safe place to leave it," came from the smaller figure.

"Shut up!" snarled Dublin, whom the boys recognized. "Those fools ain't got sense enough to

look around here for the car. I knew the old man would come and take 'em away, and this is the last place they'll look for it."

"Well, I wish that jay's hay-wagon hadn't broke down and blocked the road. We could have got away tonight without takin' no chances like this."

"Shut up, I tell yer!" growled Dublin, ascending to the mouth of the cave. "We're safe here."

After the two had disappeared in the cave, Rand cautiously led the way to the road. With the prospect of recovering the car, they could not await Frank's return, which might alarm the thieves and precipitate a fight. They reached the point where the car had been turned off and moved it out from under the trees.

"Does any one know how to run it?" queried Rand, when they stood beside the machine.

"I think I can drive it if we go slowly," Pepper replied. "Frank was showing me how this afternoon."

Very cautiously they pushed the machine into the road. They all climbed in as Rand grasped the crank, Pepper taking the wheel with a sense of responsibility. The start was successfully made, and things seemed to be moving smoothly.

"Begorra, we're going the wrong way," suddenly exclaimed Gerald.

"This is fine," groaned Jack. "Now Frank will drive right into those fellows and probably get into trouble."

"We'll have to stop to turn around," said Pepper, between his teeth. "I have not had enough experience to turn on this narrow road."

The car came to a halt and, with Pepper at the wheel, they pushed it back and forth until it was headed the other way.

"Are we going to ride up and down here all night?" asked Gerald. "The scenery is getting monotonous."

"It will s-s-soon change," replied Pepper, putting on speed as they approached the vicinity of the cave. "We want to go by here in a hurry, in case there is any interference."

"There is Frank!" exclaimed Dick, as two moving lights appeared. "Can we stop him in time?"

Suddenly the approaching automobile swung across the road within fifty feet of the cave, and Pepper slowed to a stop to avoid a collision.

"Well," said Frank, "how did you get in there?

I at once recognized the car, but I didn't expect to find you in it. Where did you find it?"

Explanations were in order and quickly made. There was a crashing of underbrush in the vicinity of the cave. Evidently the men were making their escape.

It was a slow but peaceful procession that returned to Mr. Whilden's house, and the boys told their adventures to the family, which interestedly awaited their return.

It was nearly two o'clock when they reached their beds, and they were very weary. Pepper, however, stayed awake long enough to ask one question.

"Oh, Gerald!" he called, softly, "did you see enough of the country?"

He received no answer, for Gerald was in the land of dreams, where Pepper promptly followed him, after a chuckle.

CHAPTER XIII.

INSTALLING THE ENGINE.

"IF you rig a tackle to the rafters, you can swing her into place as easy as a baby into a carriage," said the dark man in overalls. He picked up two double pulleys and drove a rope through them and, standing on a sawhorse, knotted one end of it firmly to a cross-beam of the aeroplane shed.

The engines had arrived, and the boys, with a man from Mr. Whilden's factory, were preparing to install them in the planes. A bed of pine boards for the motor had been mounted on the body of the 'plane, and the engine unpacked, ready for installation.

With the second pulley firmly lashed to the motor and a guide rope fastened to one end, the order was given to hoist away.

"Steady, hold it!" called the mechanic; "now, swing her over."

Three of the boys tailed onto the guide rope,

which ran through the body of the plane, and pulled away. As the others slacked off the engine swung between the uprights and, under the mechanic's guiding hand, settled accurately into place. Through holes, already drilled, bolts were dropped into place and solidly anchored with nuts and washers.

On an upright, at each side, midway between the body and the end, a propeller shaft bearing had been mounted. From the rear edges of the upper and lower planes, steel rods were run, meeting eight inches in front of the bearing. At this point was set the socket for the end of the propeller shaft, and on this the pressure from the propeller came.

While the mechanic, whose name was McCleod, worked on the motor he talked on the care of an engine, and the beauties of this particular make.

"She'll sing to you, if you'll only listen," he exclaimed enthusiastically, "and you *must* listen or you can't tell how she is running."

"I suppose you have flown in an aeroplane," said Jack, with the newspaperman's instinct for a story.

"I have made about a dozen trips," returned McCleod, "but I have never driven one. I have

been up several times with Kennedy, when he was trying out the Dart engine, and I must say he is the coolest man I ever saw."

McCleod worked as he talked, and he continued his story with his head beneath the driver's seat, where he was fastening the crank in place.

"Kennedy took me up about five thousand feet, on one trip, to see how the motor worked in the reduced pressure up there. While he was slowing the engine to note the result, he stalled it, some way. Well, this crank comes out between the aviator's legs, for just such an emergency"—indicating the piece he was working on—"and he reached down and gave it a twist. Snap! and the pin that held the crank to the shaft broke.

"Well, it looked to me a long way down, but he did not lose his nerve. 'Get back there and start her by the propeller,' he yelled to me, 'and I'll hold her up.' Back I climbed over the 'plane, while he let her glide, holding my side up with the ailerons. I got a grip on the upright, braced my feet and grabbed the propeller blade. No, sir, I didn't stop to look down. I just gave a good heave and the motor started up with a note as sweet as a robin. Back I crawled to my seat and said, 'I'll be mighty glad to land again—easy.'

'Rest awhile, first,' said he, 'I'm not through yet;' and I'll be hanged if he didn't stay up twenty minutes more, to finish, and then landed as cool as a cucumber. Since then we have used square ends on the shafts for crank-handles."

"He could have glided down, all right, couldn't he?" asked Pepper.

"I guess he could," returned McCleod, "but that isn't his way. He wanted to finish what he started out to do, and he did. I would have taken a rest after that."

McCleod finished fastening the chains that ran to the propellers; examined the channels in which they ran, to make sure that all was clear, and then went over the engine.

"We had better take her outside for the test," suggested Rand. "This place will fill up with smoke."

"Right-o!" agreed McCleod. "She'll make a good deal at first, too, until some of the lubricating oil is burned out."

They opened out the side of the shed and dragged the aeroplane into the sunlight. At last it was complete, and the boys gazed at it with delight. The propeller, made from solid blocks of wood, gleamed in the fresh varnish, and the busi-

ness-like appearance of the compact, grey motor gave the finishing touch to its beauty, in their eyes.

The gasoline tank was filled, oil supplied, the radiator fed, and a last inspection of the carburetor made. McCleod twisted the crank and the roar of the motor shattered the stillness. He bent an experienced ear to the sound.

"Never heard one run better," he shouted, above the noise.

He climbed in and watched it work, tested the control at the wheel and motioned to the boys.

"Hold her!" he shouted again. "I want to try the clutch."

Mindful of their experience weeks before with the Kennedy machine, they grasped the uprights, safely away from the propellers, and dug their heels into the ground. The engine checked slightly, and the big eight-foot propellers began to spin. As they gathered speed, their whir could be heard through the roar of the exhaust. As the strain increased, McCleod throttled down the engine, enabling the boys to hold the machine in place. He shut off the motor and went over it again, looking for hot bearings and other signs of trouble. At last he climbed down.

"Start whenever you like, boys," he said. "She's just waiting for you."

"Mr. Kennedy is coming down to-morrow, to give us some points on tuning," replied Pepper. "We intend to wait until then, rather than take chances."

"Good for you," returned McCleod. "In the meantime we will get the other engine in and leave the job all ready for him."

Pepper spent the ensuing hour in inspecting the finished plane, tightening nuts and making sure that all connections were free.

The other boys aided McCeod in installing the second motor. Twilight had come when the second test was finished and the machines safely "put to bed" in their sheds. The young men were weary, but filled with anticipation.

"Look h-h-here," exclaimed Pepper, as he hurried into Rand's house the next morning, "I'll bet there's something wrong with that p-p-propeller."

"Why so?" asked Rand, in surprise.

"B-b-because, I f-forgot to look at it," returned Pepper. "Let's look now. I thought of it as soon as I woke up."

They walked out to the shed, and the sight of their clean-cut flier gave them a thrill.

"Isn't she a dandy?" demanded Rand. "I wish we had her out now."

"L-l-let me look at the p-p-propeller, first," said Pepper.

The first one he inspected was solid enough and showed no sign under his twisting. The other one, however, rattled under his hand on the shaft.

"I knew it," he grunted, in a tone of satisfaction, as he worked away at it. It's always the part that you don't look at that g-gives way."

By the time the propeller was rekeyed on the shaft, the other boys had arrived.

"Look here!" exclaimed Jack, suddenly, "we ought to name them. We can't tell one from the other without pointing."

"You're elected, Jack," cried Dick. "What's in a name?"

"Everything, if it's the right one," retorted Jack. "What about 'Eagle' for one?"

"I think 'Up' and 'Upper' would be good names," suggested Dick.

"Fine!" exclaimed Rand, sarcastically. "Everybody would think you were talking about a couple of elevators."

"So I am," returned Dick. "That is perfectly *plane*."

"Let's get down to brass tacks," interrupted Jack.

"'Thistledown' is no a bad name," offered Don.

"This is no the old country," mimicked Jack.

"I think 'Eagle' is a good name," said Rand. "How would 'Hawk' do for the other?"

"Any other nominations?" asked Jack. "Then the nominations are closed. All those in favor—Those opposed don't need to say anything. The motion is carried."

"Wait a minute," called Pepper, diving into the shed. "We'll fix them up now."

He returned in a moment, with a can of paint, a brush and some crayons. Crawling under the lower plane, he blocked out the letters with the crayon.

"Now, then," he said, seizing the brush and paint, "company, attention! The famous aviator, Mr. Gerald Moore, will name this noble craft."

Gerald received the brush and crawled beneath the plane.

'I name you 'Eagle,'" he exclaimed, with a heroic splash of the brush, "and good luck to ye."

The Scouts, at attention, then gave the salute, and Pepper hastily finished the job of filling in the letters.

"Nobody can see the name, down there," grumbled Dick, suddenly discovering the supposed error.

"They are not supposed to, Foolish One," retorted Rand. "They are supposed to see it up there. When it is on the ground we are supposed to be around to tell its name."

"I move that Rand name the 'Hawk,'" suggested Pepper.

"No, fellows; Pepper ought to name the other," said Rand. "He first had the idea of building them and he has done most of the planning."

"N-n-not at all——" began Pepper.

"Objection overruled," interrupted Jack. "Pepper, you are ordered to name the 'Hawk,' under penalty of staying on the ground for six months."

"All r-right," returned Pepper, greatly pleased. "But I don't see what *ground* you have for your order."

"The ground you are standing on," retorted Jack.

Just as the salute, in celebration of the christen-

ing, rang out, Mr. Kennedy appeared on the path.

"All ready for business, I see," he said, after greetings had been exchanged.

"That is our motto," replied Rand.

"Let us see if the engine lives up to it," said Mr. Kennedy, and with a twist of the crank he sent the roar of the exhaust echoing across the fields.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN THE AIR.

MR. KENNEDY listened to the motor for a few minutes with a look of satisfaction, then shut it off.

"I want to make a little trial flight alone first," he said. "She has been inspected, of course."

"Just as you told us," replied Rand, promptly. "Before and after every trip."

The aviator swept a keen glance over the machine as he climbed to the seat. A twist of the crank set the motor roaring—no need now to have the machine held. The clutch slid home and the "Eagle" glided smoothly away across the short grass. Faster and faster, then—a flicker of the rudders and she was in the air. The boys cheered as she swept in a great circle above their heads. The sound of the motor ceased and she came down in a swift volplane, landing within a dozen feet of the starting point.

"She rides like a gull," said Mr. Kennedy, en-

thusiastically. "Whom shall I take up? I can only teach one to-day and he must show the others."

"Gerald is our best," replied Rand. "He will learn quickest. Take him."

The others assented, and Gerald climbed to the seat beside the aviator.

A turn of the crank and, with a turn or two of the wheel to make sure all was free, Kennedy threw in the clutch.

The "Eagle" swept away across the grass, while Gerald watched keenly every movement of Kennedy's strong brown hands upon the wheel. She gathered speed until the grass was whipping sharply beneath the skids and he moved the elevating rudder. The jarring glide suddenly ceased and the ground seemed to drop away. They were rising. She tilted slightly in a gust, but the steady hands brought the ailerons into play and she swung level again.

They had reached a height of sixty feet when they approached the trees as the edge of the meadow.

"Now, watch," said Kennedy.

He turned the wheel swiftly and the 'plane began to swing to the left, tilting in that direction

as she did so. Kennedy turned the ailerons—the left one down and the right one up—nearly to their limit, and back she came, almost level and swinging in a wide circle. Headed for the starting point, he straightened her out, at the same time releasing the ailerons. Over the starting point he turned again.

"Always land facing the wind," he cautioned Gerald. "Then it can't upset when your power is off."

Kennedy headed her for the ground and shut off his motor. "Start your volplane before shutting off," he told the attentive Gerald. "That keeps up your speed and you can control the machine."

Down they swooped at a steep angle until she was barely twenty feet from the ground. Then a swift shift of the rudders and she turned off to a smooth glide and landed with hardly a jar.

"Now, you take her," said Kennedy, rising. "I'll tell you when to swing her, until you get the feel of it. You'll find she is a little slower to answer because of the weight of the motor."

They exchanged seats, Gerald adjusted the rudders and cranked the engine. He sent home the clutch, and the whine of the propellers began

to rise through the sound of the motor. Swiftly she gathered speed, and Kennedy flung up his hand. Gerald turned the rudder and the "Eagle" rose into the air. He let her climb until he reached nearly fifty feet, then, on a level, Kennedy motioned for a turn. Gerald swung the wheel and, for a moment, he thrilled as she banked on the curve. Then the ailerons took hold and she straightened up. With the weight of the engine, she dropped faster than he expected, but he caught her at the right point and landed easily.

"Fine!" exclaimed Kennedy. "You will not need much teaching, but be careful till you learn her tricks. Gliding has helped you a great deal."

"In my opinion," said Don, as the boys gathered around, "if it could be done, it would no be so bad if we could all go up."

"That is quite an opinion," retorted Jack, "but this is no a carry-all."

"I think we can get around that," laughed Kennedy. "With the power you have, you can take two passengers. How does that strike you?"

"Hurrah for the picnic!" cried Dick. "We'll have a party in the clouds."

"In my opinion, it would be safer to stay on the plane," interjected Don.

"Faith!" exclaimed Gerald. "Ye show poor taste. Wouldn't ye rather be sitting on a cloud like a cherub?"

"Who ever heard of a cherub with a Scotch accent?" demanded Rand. "Let him sit on the plane if he wants to, and Dick can have the clouds to himself."

"That reminds me——" began Dick.

"Not this time," interrupted Jack. "It is bad luck just before making an ascent."

"All aboard!" called Kennedy, from the wheel, and Dick and Don started on their trip.

When all had made a flight, Mr. Kennedy cautioned them about flying in tricky winds and left amid a chorus of thanks and good wishes.

The boys practised at every opportunity for the next few days, gradually extending their flights as they became more proficient. Gerald's inborn skill made him equally as good in this field as he had been at gliding. The Dart motors ran so perfectly that the boys felt safe in making cross-country flights in any mild weather and even carried each other as passengers.

One morning Rand reached the shed before the other boys arrived and, tempted by the beautiful weather, determined to take a spin "all by

his lonesome," as he put it, but later he wished he had waited for company.

He brought out the "Eagle" under its own power, by skillful manoeuvering, and was soon circling two or three hundred feet in the air. Away he went across country at an easy forty-five miles an hour.

He had covered three or four miles when the motor began to miss. The trouble rapidly grew worse, and he looked anxiously about for a place to land. The plane was slowly dropping when he discovered a small field on his right. He swung toward it and, just clearing the trees at its edge, glided to the ground.

After a careful inspection he found the trouble in a dirty carburetor and set to work to clean it. While he worked he heard voices from the side of the field, and glancing over his shoulder he saw a man and a boy approaching.

"In trouble, bo?" asked the man, gruffly.

"Yes," said Rand, looking up, and imagine his suprise. It was Rae and Monkey!

"Want any help?" asked Monkey, with a grin.

"I think I can fix it myself," returned Rand, quietly.

"Well, you don't need to be fresh about it,"

said Rae. "I know all about these things. Worked up in Kennedy's shop for six months."

"And then didn't get paid," put in Monkey.

"I got my pay all right," growled Rae, slapping his breast pocket. "Hurry up with the machine, kid. We are on a trip and want a little boost."

"You haven't been invited," said Rand, firing up at the other's manner.

"You don't have to invite us," replied Rae, with a grin. "We know how to be sociable."

"I don't want your society," exclaimed Rand.

"We'll leave you behind, then," retorted Rae. "You don't have to come."

"If you do, he'll get the cops after us," said Monkey, "and we'd be as bad off as ever."

"The cops!" roared Rae, furiously. "They're always after me. Ain't we been trying to flit for three months, and they watchin' every road."

Rand had learned their intentions too late, for the carburetor was already replaced. However, he said to himself:

"I hope it don't run."

When Rae turned the crank, however, the motor responded promptly.

"Git in," Rae called to Monkey, and he promptly clambered aboard.

"Fare thee well," called Rae, but even as he spoke, as the plane started Rand climbed in on the other side. He could not then easily be robbed of his precious possession.

"Steady, bo," exclaimed Rae. "This ain't no seesaw."

Rae drove somewhat clumsily, but he was evidently an expert and knew the machine, though Rand felt none too safe.

"Say, pop, those other guys are after us," exclaimed Monkey, looking back.

"They are, hey!" said Rae. "Well, I'll fool 'em. Curse their nosey habits."

Rand felt a thrill of hope, though a glance showed that the other machine was far away.

"Say, pop——" began Monkey.

"Shut up!" roared his affectionate parent. "I'm busy."

He turned the machine too sharply and nearly spilled them out, but managed to make an awkward landing in an open space. He drove the machine over the ground till she was sheltered by some trees and climbed out.

"We'll stay here till they git tired looking for us," he said. "Fix up some grub, Jimmie. I'm hungry."

Rand was meditating his chances if he made a dash with the machine, but Rae seemed to guess his thoughts.

"Might as well sit down, kid," said the man. "You're in good company and likely to stay. Have a chair, so as I don't have to tie you up."

Rand seated himself, determined to take the first opportunity to escape and secure help, though he hated even temporarily to leave the "Eagle" in their hands.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SEARCH.

"CRICKETS!" exclaimed Pepper, as he saw the empty shed. "Somebody is an early bird."

"He's gone pretty far to look for a worm," returned Jack. "He isn't in sight."

"We might go up and look for him," suggested Pepper. "We can all go."

Pepper, Jack and Gerald had just arrived at the shed and made a full load for the "Hawk."

They brought out the plane and after a rapid examination Gerald sent her into the air. As they circled up, the boys kept a keen watch over the surrounding country.

Immediate success did not attend their efforts. Nothing of their absent chum could be discerned, and a return was made to their starting point to replenish fuel supplies. Then another flight was attempted, this time with definite results.

A long distance away they could see the tiny figure of an aeroplane against the sky.

"There he is," cried Jack, pointing, and referring to Rand. "He is just rising. He must have landed for something."

"He's running away from us," exclaimed Pepper, after a few moments. "That's not a fair race. We are carrying more weight."

"He is pretty clumsy," said Gerald as the other plane tilted sharply. Hello! he's landing again."

"Something must be wrong," suggested Jack. "There's nothing over there but fields."

Ten minutes' steady flying brought them over the neighborhood where the other machine had vanished, but from their position nothing was to be seen.

"You don't suppose he smashed on the trees, do you?" queried Jack, anxiously.

"He had plenty of room to land," returned Gerald, "and pick out a smooth spot. Though where can we look for him when we don't know where he went? We were too far away to tell."

They traveled about a bit in different directions but could see little among the trees, and they met again rather dejectedly beside the "Hawk." If they had only landed in the next field!

"Nobody but one of us could have taken the 'Eagle,'" said Jack, "because the door and lock of the shed were not broken."

"L-let's go back and hold a council," suggested Pepper. "Then we can find out who it is."

Once more the "Hawk" rose into the air, and sped back to the shed. When they landed the boys found Dick and Don awaiting them.

"Where is the 'Eagle?'" asked Dick, as the "Hawk" came to rest.

"That is what we want to know," returned Jack. "When we got here we found the shed open and the 'Eagle' gone. Then we went up to look for her and saw her rising three or four miles away. When we followed, she landed again and we could not find her."

"You don't suppose he broke down, do you?" queried Dick.

"Seems as if we would have found the wreck if he had," replied Pepper. "He must be playing a joke and hiding from us."

"It looks fishy to me," said Jack. "There's something wrong."

"I'll b-bet Monkey Rae is m-mixed up in it," exclaimed Pepper, with an inspiration. "He is always at the b-bottom of any trouble."

"Here he comes!" called Dick, pointing up in the air to an approaching aircraft.

"In my opinion," replied Don, after a moment, "it is no him."

"Why not?" demanded Dick.

"There is no name painted on the lower plane," retorted Don.

The aircraft nevertheless circled overhead and glided steadily to earth, landing scarcely a dozen feet away.

"Mr. Kennedy!" burst from all five at once.

"The same," answered Kennedy, with a smile. "But you look troubled. What is it?"

"We have lost the 'Eagle,' " replied Dick.

"And Rand," added Jack.

"You mean he has lost himself," queried Kennedy.

"Begorra, he lost us," said Gerald.

"Things seems to be a little mixed and I feel a little lost myself," remarked Kennedy. "Can't you explain?"

So Jack told how they had found the shed empty and had gone up to look for the machine, how it had disappeared when they followed, and their inability to locate it.

"He would not act like that," concluded Jack. "There must be something wrong."

"Perhaps I can suggest something," said Kennedy. "I came down here on a rather forlorn hope today. A man in my shop was discharged the other day for loafing. I took him on at first because he knew a great deal about machinery. After he had gone I missed some valuable plans of a new automatic stabilizer I have invented. I learned from the workmen that he had been hanging around that day and I put the police on his trail. They soon learned that he is an escaped convict who had given me an assumed name but whose right name is Rae, and he comes from this vicinity."

"Rae!" exclaimed the boys together.

"I knew it!" cried Pepper. "He is always making trouble."

"You know him, then?" queried Kennedy, hopefully.

"I should say we did," replied Jack. "He seems to have a hand in every crime that is carried out in this neighborhood."

"Describe him," suggested Kennedy, which the boys promptly did.

"Sounds like the man," said Kennedy. "The

police trailed him to Creston, but could not lay hands on him. As he knew your machines were here, I thought he might attempt to steal one as a last resort to escape in. I must catch him before he can sell those plans, or there will be all kinds of trouble for me."

"If he got Rand to land in some way, he might have overpowered him," suggested Jack. "That would explain the behavior of the 'Eagle.' "

"It is possible," admitted Kennedy. "I will go up and look around, for my eyes are pretty well trained. You think he landed about north of here?"

"Very nearly," replied Gerald.

Kennedy climbed into his machine, started his motor and was off. Instead of heading north, however, he swung in great circles, climbing up and up, till the 'plane seemed scarcely two inches long. Then he headed north, moving slowly against the breeze but holding his height.

"How can he see, 'way up there?" demanded Dick.

"He can see anything that moves," replied Gerald, "and people are not likely to notice him. He's thinking they may be careless, if he doesn't make a noise."

Suddenly the 'plane began to drop rapidly. Then, swinging in a wide circle, she headed for the shed again.

"He has seen something!" exclaimed Dick.

"Why d-didn't he l-land, then, and help Rand?" demanded Pepper indignantly, and they impatiently awaited the arrival of the 'plane. When Kennedy landed he was deluged with questions.

"I did not risk going very near," he finally managed to reply, "but I made out a man and a boy. I think they saw me, for they scuttled out of sight. As Rae is a dangerous character, I did not care to go after him single-handed. Have you any weapons?"

"Rand has a revolver in the house that I can get," replied Jack, hurrying away.

"Good! I would like to have one with me," said Kennedy. "One will be enough."

In a few minutes Jack returned with the weapon.

"How did you get it without alarming Mrs. Peyton?" asked Kennedy, making sure it was loaded.

"I told her we were after a skunk," replied Jack.

"Faith, ye were not far wrong," commented Gerald. "What did she say?"

"She hoped we would get him, and I hope so, too," he added.

"All aboard!" called Kennedy, from his seat, and Dick and Don climbed in, one on either side.

Gerald took the wheel of the "Hawk" and one after another they were off.

"I hope he doesn't go up to the sky again," said Gerald, watching Kennedy, but the latter, at a height of three hundred feet, headed north.

They had covered nearly two and a half miles, almost side by side, when something caught Kennedy's eye, and he shouted:

"There they go!"

A mile and a half away a 'plane was rising above the trees.

"It's the 'Eagle,'" said Gerald. "Faith, I'd know her in a ditch."

The two 'planes, better handled, crept up on the "Eagle" until only a scant half mile separated them.

"They can't lose us now," shouted Kennedy. "I can hear their motor missing."

"Begorra, there's three of them in it," exclaimed Gerald.

"I knew M-monkey would be around," said Pepper. "L-l-look! They are having trouble."

"They'll fall!" cried Jack. "There they go!"

It seemed as if two struggling figures toppled, but the dropping 'plane disappeared behind a clump of trees, leaving the anxious pursuers in ignorance of the result.

CHAPTER XVI.

A DARING ACT.

WHILE Rae was eating some of the food that Monkey had brought, Rand heard the puffing of a locomotive from beyond the trees across the field, and determined to make a dash in that direction if he could not regain sole possession of the "Eagle."

Monkey was sitting in the 'plane, interesting himself with the wheel. He had been trained to crooked paths, but perhaps if circumstances had been different, his might have been a worthy life. Anyway, he was absorbed now in the study of the aircraft.

Rae stretched himself on the ground, his head pillowed on his folded coat. As Rae dozed, the end of a folded paper projecting from the inner pocket caught Rand's eye.

"If that is the 'pay' he spoke of, he probably stole it," said Rand, to himself.

Rae moved restlessly, and the paper dropped

out upon the ground. Rand walked past the prone figure of Rae and picked up the paper and quickly slipped it inside his shirt. He had not been observed. Monkey was still busy, and Rae was dozing quietly. The time seemed opportune, so he darted into the open. Rae, wakened by the sound, sprang to his feet and rushed after him. Rand hoped to out-run his pursuer, but one foot slipped into a hole and he came down at full length with a wrenched ankle. Before he could rise Rae was upon him.

"Come back here," he growled, dragging Rand to his feet. "You can stay a while longer."

As he spoke a shadow passed over them, and both looked up. High above them a 'plane was turning. Rand waved his hand, but Rae pushed him back under the shelter of the trees.

"Now we'll have to git," snarled Rae. "They seen us."

Rae and Monkey put their shoulders to the machine, but it was not until Rae compelled Rand's assistance that they were able to swing the "Eagle" around and get her clear of the bushes. Rae climbed to the driver's seat, allowing Rand to get in beside him, where the latter was glad to

lie back, as the increasing pain of his ankle made him feel faint.

Once clear of the trees Rae headed north again.

"There's two of them after us," cried Monkey, looking back.

"Let 'em come," grunted Rae. "I know where I'm going."

Rand, feeling better in the fresh breeze, glanced back.

"If I could only help them some way," he groaned, to himself, but any move seemed too greatly fraught with danger to be worthy of consideration.

Monkey unwittingly solved the problem. This experience was new to him, and awkwardly attempting a change of position he tore loose two of the wires connected with the cylinder. He would indeed have fallen had not Rand by a quick and perilous move grasped his clothing, and held him secure. It was in view of all the facts a most commendable and manly act.

The cylinder immediately began to miss. The "Eagle," slowed by the loss of power, was promptly affected and began to drop. Monkey and Rand pitched forward together, almost on the edge of the 'plane, but Rae cleared the last

RAND GRASPED HIS CLOTHING.

few trees and swept to the ground with a decided bump.

"Come on!" promptly yelled Rae to Monkey, breaking Rand's grasp on Monkey's collar, Rand tumbling to the ground.

He scrambled up again, but the fugitives were racing across the field toward a slowly moving freight train. With one foot useless, Rand could do nothing but watch them.

Just as they reached the cars, Gerald and Kennedy appeared above the trees. Kennedy went straight on toward the train, where Rae and Monkey had climbed into an empty car. The 'plane circled above them, but the train, gathering speed, was disappearing into a tunnel. As Kennedy landed, Rae leaned out of the car and shook his fist at him, then vanished in the darkness of the tunnel.

In the meantime, the "Hawk" had circled to the ground beside the "Eagle."

"Hurrah!" cried Pepper, leaping to the ground. "There's Rand."

"Happy to meet you, I'm sure," said Rand, as they wrung his hand in relief.

"You seem to be keeping bad company," said Jack.

"I'm not keeping them," returned Rand. "Didn't you see them go?"

"Why didn't you keep thim whin you had thim?" demanded Gerald. "Misther Kennedy wants to have a talk with thim."

"He'll have to call again; he has found them out this time," said Jack.

"That is why he wanted to see thim—he found Rae out once before," returned Gerald, looking at the "Eagle's" motor. "Why, the wires are broken!"

"Yes," responded Rand, hobbling toward the machine. "That is why you gained on us so rapidly."

"Are you hurt?" exclaimed Jack, noting Rand's painful progress.

"I sprained my ankle trying to get away from them," returned Rand. "I don't think that struggle in the air helped it any, either."

Pepper examined the ankle and bandaged it up with a couple of handkerchiefs, while Gerald temporarily repaired the motor. The other boys raced across the field from Kennedy's machine and congratulated Rand on his escape without more serious injury.

"Tell us how it happened," demanded Dick.

"Better wait until we get back and can make him comfortable," interrupted Kennedy, who came up at that moment. "There is no use in staying here any longer."

"The motor is all right," said Gerald, who had been testing it. "I'll take Rand back in the 'Eagle' and the rest can divide between the 'Hawk' and Mr. Kennedy's machine."

In a few moments, the 'planes were in the air, one after another, and soon reached the shed. Rand was carried to the house and, while home remedies were applied, made comfortable in a chair on the porch. While they waited Rand related the story of his adventures. When he came to the point where he told of the paper that had dropped from Rae's pocket, Mr. Kennedy uttered an exclamation.

"Will you let me see it, please?" he asked.

Rand reached inside his shirt and drew forth the paper. Mr. Kennedy opened it out and recognized it at a glance.

"That is it!" he exclaimed. "I owe you many thanks for this service."

"What is it?" asked Rand, in surprise.

Mr. Kennedy told him what had happened at

his factory and how he came to take part in the pursuit.

"I think we are even," said Rand. "If you had not seen me when you went up, I would probably still be in Rae's clutches."

"What I did was good fortune, while your act was pluck," returned Kennedy. "There is something else I want to speak about before I go. An aeroplane meet is to be held at the field near Riverton, where you won your motor. I have an entry for a special event, but my driver was disabled and I have no one to take his place. I cannot go myself, as I must be in Washington next week. I thought perhaps Gerald would be willing to drive for me."

"What is the event?" asked Gerald.

"It is principally a test in 'plane building and driving," returned Mr. Kennedy. "The motor control is locked at fifteen hundred revolutions, and the feat of winning the race depends on the efficiency of the machine and its skillful handling. There are only two entries besides mine, and I cannot see any possibility of danger."

"Faith, I'd be glad to do it," announced Gerald, "but the machines belong to the Uncas Patrol, and you'll have to get their permission first."

"Well, gentlemen," said Mr. Kennedy, "may I borrow your best aviator for a day? If he wins, half the prize money shall go to the Patrol. I am entering partly for the advertising I gain."

"We are glad to lend him to you, Mr. Kennedy, and we will all go down and cheer him on," replied Rand, speaking for the Patrol. "You must promise to return him undamaged, though."

"I think I can safely promise that," laughed Mr. Kennedy, "and I will arrange for your admission, so that you may look after him yourselves."

"That will be fine," said Jack. "When is the meet?"

"One week from to-day," replied Mr. Kennedy, rising to go. "Mr. Whilden is to handle my interests, and he will arrange for the care of your machine. I suppose you prefer to drive your own."

"The 'Eagle' is the best machine in the country," announced Gerald, with fervor.

"That means you understand her," laughed Mr. Kennedy. "I need not ask you to do your best, but I hope you will have the best of luck. Goodbye."

A few moments later his machine circled overhead and darted away to the north.

"Crickets!" exclaimed Pepper, "here it is half-past two and I haven't had a thing to eat since breakfast."

"That is terrible," laughed Mrs. Peyton, appearing in the door-way with a pan full of doughnuts. "Do you think these will save your life?"

"I'll try it," replied Pepper, as the boys expressed their thanks. "They look like life-preservers."

CHAPTER XVII.

A TRIUMPH.

ON the day following Rand's adventure, the Scouts received word from Mr. Whilden that their *hangar* or aeroplane shed was ready to receive them. He suggested that they come down as soon as possible, in order that the motor might be inspected and adjusted by one of the men from his factory.

"We ought to go at once," suggested Jack. "Gerald will want to practice over the course and learn what he can do at the speed required."

"What can we do with Rand?" queried Dick.

"We can go in the 'planes," returned Pepper. "He doesn't need his foot to fly."

"It was lucky that the 'Eagle' didn't sprain a wing as well as I a foot," said Rand from his chair. "Rae steered as though she were a wheelbarrow."

"She is all right now," returned Gerald, coming up on the porch. "I've just been over her and she's as fine as a needle."

"I don't see the point," exclaimed Dick, quickly.

"Let me point it out to you," returned Jack, producing a pin.

"I see it!" cried Dick, suspecting his purpose.

"Let me impress it upon you," urged Jack, advancing.

"Peace, children," interrupted Rand. "Let us proceed to business. We had better start this morning, unless there is some objection."

"We can all be ready to leave in an hour," said Jack.

The boys hastened to their homes and, their plans explained and parents' permission obtained and what little equipment they required collected, they returned to the sheds.

Gerald was to go as a passenger, with Rand, the ever-cautious Don driving; Dick and Jack were to travel in the "Hawk" with Pepper at the wheel. By ten o'clock they were off, five hundred feet up, with the green forests and golden fields speeding beneath them in a panorama.

At the end of a pleasant and uneventful flight the 'planes dropped into the Riverton aviation grounds and the boys climbed down to stretch their legs. Across the field was the row of dark green *hangars* with their big white numbers

painted over the doors. Some were open, affording glimpses of the machines within, and around these men were busy. Now and then the deep mutter of a motor test echoed across the field, and the figures climbed through the drifting smoke and about the whirling blades.

"C-c-crickets!" exclaimed Gerald. "I guess we d-didn't c-come too early to the p-party. Everybody seems to be d-dressing up."

"How do the motors run?" asked a voice at his elbow, and the boys turned around to greet McCleod.

"Fine as a needle, as Gerald says," returned Jack.

"Mr. Whilden told me to go over them," said McCleod. "If you'll run them over to the shed I'll start now and you can get to work. Your shed is number seven."

"Sivin!" exclaimed Gerald. "Begorra, that's the same number we had before, and 'twas a lucky wan."

"I see you have the aviator's faith in lucky numbers," laughed McCleod.

" 'Twill do no harm," returned Gerald.

The machines were run across to the shed and McCleod set to work, with Gerald helping him.

The Scouts were visited by some of the other aviators and soon found themselves on an interested tour of the other sheds. Rand had remained in the 'plane with Gerald, as he said, "condoling with my aero-leg." In the midst of the work, Nellie and Frank Whilden burst in.

"I'm awfully glad you came so soon," cried the former. "Now we can get in your way and learn all about how you do it. Why, what is the matter with your foot?"

"I sprained my ankle running away from a man," returned Rand, with a smile.

"He forgot to say he could still use his hands afterward," said Gerald, shaking hands.

"Tell me about it, please," she begged. "Have those Raes been making trouble again?"

"They did, a little," admitted Rand, but Gerald interrupted him and told of his adventure.

"That was fine," said Nellie and Frank together, when they heard of Rand's daring act in the air. "I can fix you up," continued the latter. "There is an old pair of crutches at the house, that grandfather had. I'll bring them down," and off he went.

Fifteen minutes later Rand, Nellie and Frank had joined the touring party in their eager inspec-

tion of the various machines. As they approached one lonely *hangar,* however, they met a rebuff.

"Keep out! This is private," cried an angry voice.

"I meant to tell you to keep away from this cantankerous chap," said one of the aviators. "Some men don't like to have visitors around their 'planes, but this fellow thinks he has a world-beater and he is keeping it dark."

"Suppose we look over the 'Hawk,' instead," suggested Don. "You haven't seen her and you can ask all the questions you like."

Accepting this offer they returned to the shed, where they found Gerald sitting gloomily on the edge of the 'plane.

"W-what's the matter, D-d-despondency?" asked Pepper, noticing his attitude.

"I'm out of it," returned Gerald.

"Out of what? Out of sorts?" demanded Dick.

"Yes, and out of the race, too," returned the gloomy one.

"What happened?" cried all together.

"I was helping McCleod with the crank-shaft," replied Gerald, "and I slipped and sprained my thumb," and he held up a very puffy hand.

"Now what can we do?" queried Jack.

"Cheer up! Rand is nearly as good," returned Pepper. "He can win."

"But he's crippled, too."

"I don't drive with my feet, you booby," exclaimed Rand. "If you all think I am the next best man, I'm just aching for the chance."

"We can tell this afternoon," said Pepper. "You are our best chance now, anyway."

After lunch with the Whildens, the party returned to the field and brought out the "Eagle." Rand felt a little nervous as he took the wheel under a score of expert eyes in the other sheds, but the steady throbbing of the motor restored his coolness. He left the ground cleanly and, swinging over the course, began to try out the curves. He made half a dozen circuits, gauging the closeness with which he could approach the *pylons,* or posts that marked the tracks, without swinging over them. When he descended McCleod grasped his hand.

"You'll give them a fight for it," said the mechanic. "Here's to another 'first' for the Dart Motor. You must look out for the pie-lons, though, for if you leave the course you'll be penalized a lap."

"Mr. Kennedy told us," replied Rand. "I'll be watching."

"P-p-pie-lon sounds better than p-p-peelon, I think," said Pepper, as the mechanic moved away.

"You were always fond of pie," laughed Jack, "but peelon is the proper pronunciation."

"I think Nellie and Frank ought to make a trip," Pepper interrupted.

"Oh! can we?" cried Nellie, delighted.

"Of course," replied Pepper, climbing to the wheel, lest anyone should forestall him.

Two circuits of the course filled Nellie and Frank with more sensations than they could describe, and they were loud in praise of Pepper's aircraftmanship, which the latter modestly disclaimed.

The days intervening before the meet passed rapidly in grooming the "Eagle" and Rand's steady practice. His ankle troubled him not at all and he was soon making turns with the ease and accuracy of a professional.

The afternoon of the meet arrived, and the Scouts gathered in a grave but hopeful group about the "Eagle," awaiting the calling of their event. The stands rapidly filled with a many-colored mass of spectators and the air trembled with

the thunder of motor-testing. The Scouts were intensely interested in the events and cheered the winners as heartily as the spectators. The climax came when their big guide of the first day won the altitude event and descended in a "corkscrew glide." The audience rose with a roar as the big white machine revolved on one wing and shot off in a long glide across the field, while the cheers echoed.

"That's dare-deviltry," said McCleod. "He'll be killed yet. Don't you try it."

"We'll not," replied Don, with a shiver. "Plain flying is good enough."

Their event was called—a contest for motors locked at fifteen hundred revolutions of the propellers. The winning depended on skill in driving.

The first machine to start was "this cantankerous chap" who had looked daggers at his competitors whenever he met them. Rand was second and the only other competitor was last. The Scout crossed the line on the signal, half a lap behind his rival. The race was for distance covered in one hour, and with motors even, every foot would count.

In some way the crowd learned that a Boy Scout with an injured ankle was driving Number Seven,

and Rand received thunderous applause on every lap. His mind was on his work, however, and he only learned afterward that he was the favorite.

The motor ran sweetly and, at the end of three laps, he could see that he had gained a little. The crowd noted the difference and urged him on.

When forty-five minutes had passed, he was so close that he caught the back-wash from his rival's propellers, while both had twice lapped the third man. He attempted to rise, but the other machine rose also, keeping him in the same relative position. The swiftly driven air from the propellers bothered him considerably, but whenever he strove to avoid it the other machine moved also and blocked him off. He determined to hold his position and win on the difference in time, but on a turn the whirling current brushed one wing and swung him off the course. He had lost a lap! His rival looked back and laughed. This was too much, and Rand set his teeth in determination.

The Scout was now half a lap behind, instead of half a lap ahead, but a plan came to him like a flash. He lifted his rudder slightly and rose steadily. The other did likewise. A hundred feet up Rand suddenly dipped, shooting forward in a steep glide. His rival followed, but not quickly

enough, and thirty feet from the ground Rand was directly beneath him. Suddenly Rand felt a jar, his machine dropped a dozen feet, rocking heavily. He could not see what had happened, but the stands were yelling furiously. He steadied the machine and tried to rise. There was another bump, a scrape, and he rose clear. The watch before him showed fifty-eight minutes!

He did not dare waste time looking back, but drove with all his skill. The *pylons* flowed past just beyond his wing tip and he held the "Eagle" sternly to her work.

Sixty minutes! The "Eagle" landed gently at one side of the course and Rand noted the third competitor on the far turn. He turned toward the judges, while the crowd yelled itself hoarse. His brother Scouts swarmed upon him and swung him to their shoulders, pointing at the score-board. It read:

First. 7.
Second. 9.
Third. —

"What happened?" he shouted through the pandemonium that roared from the stands.

"Come on, and we'll tell you," yelled Jack in reply, and they bore him off the field on their shoulders.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONCLUSION.

"TELL me about it," insisted Rand, when they had reached the comparative quiet of the shed. "I couldn't see a thing."

"When you tried to drive under him," explained Jack, "he dropped to cut you off. You were too fast for him, though, and he bumped on your upper plane."

"But I bumped him again," said Rand. "How was that?"

"It was his f-fault," Pepper burst out angrily. "H-h-he did it purposely. When he saw that you c-could pass if he rose, he t-tried to f-force you down t-to the t-track."

"Then," Dick interrupted, "when you rose, you tipped him over backward and his speed was not enough to hold him."

"Was he hurt?" asked Rand, in surprise.

"No," replied Don, "but he deserved to be. He smashed his propellers, but they dragged the 'plane off the course before you came around."

"He would have been disqualified, anyway," said Dick, "but it was a dirty trick."

"Niver mind," Gerald rejoined. "We won, and the 'Eagle' is all right and so is Rand. Begorra, give me seven for a lucky number."

"Looks like you were right," McCleod's cheery voice chimed in. "Congratulations to the Scouts and the motor."

"Thank you," returned Rand, "but I think you deserve a share for your work on the engine."

A number of the aviators also appeared to praise Rand for his plucky work. He received them modestly and as soon as possible set out with his brother Scouts to Mr. Whilden's house to make their farewells.

"Does anybody know how much we won?" queried Dick, on the way back to the *hangar*. "I never thought to ask."

"Three hundred and fifty dollars in gold," replied Jack, who was always supplied with information.

"Faith, that is quite a flock of eagles," remarked Gerald.

"They would carry you farther than our own Eagle,' " added Dick.

"Begorra, I wish they would fly away to Alaska

with me," said Gerald. "I might find those mammoth tusks."

"P-p-personally, I p-prefer a square m-meal, just now," Pepper interrupted. "I'm empty clear down to my toes."

"You'll be lighter to carry, then," retorted Jack, "and we'll get home quicker."

The machines inspected, the boys took their seats, and the "Eagle" and the "Hawk" rolled out across the field together. A dozen of their friends from the neighboring sheds waved them good-by.

A few miles from the field, the machines passed some of the nearer hills, and from one of these there projected a steep cliff a hundred and fifty feet high.

"Look!" cried Jack, pointing. "There is an eagle beside her nest."

On a ledge beneath the overhanging crest, there was a loose bundle of sticks, guarded by a big bird. She looked up as the machine approached, and with a hoarse scream launched into the air.

"She's coming for us!" exclaimed Dick.

The "Hawk" shot away on a long slant, while the "Eagle" rose to avoid the attack. The big bird, however, seemed to regard the latter action as a challenge, and followed upward. The power-

ful wings raised the light body faster than the heavily loaded 'plane, and the bird was soon above them. With another scream she landed herself at Gerald, talons and beak outstretched.

"Hold tight!" he cried, and headed sharply down.

The bird, baffled by the sudden change of course, struck heavily on the upper plane, and the sharp claws gashed the tough fabric.

"Crickets!" exclaimed Pepper, glancing up. "She ought to c-c-cut her nails."

"In my opinion, it is no serious," said Don, "but I'll like it a weel if she does no more."

"Lucky we had Gerald at the helm, I think," said Pepper. "Something serious might have happened."

"I read of an attack on an aviator in Spain, and I profited by his experience," admitted Gerald. "I guess we got off very easily."

The bird seemed to consider her speedy opponent vanquished and gave up the chase, much to the boys' relief.

The Scouts had left the field much later than they thought and, as they approached Creston, the dusk was deepening rapidly. A big moon, how-

ever, aided them somewhat in locating their landing place.

"Begorra, she looks like silver," Gerald exclaimed, as the "Hawk" dropped away before them toward the ground.

The moonlight, though beautiful, proved deceptive, for Gerald suddenly discovered the ground to be much closer than he expected. The "Eagle" bumped heavily, tumbling Don and Pepper to the ground.

"In my opinion," said Don picking himself up, "ye might have found a softer place for that. I doot if I've no damaged everything except my appetite."

"If you have that," returned Gerald, "the rest will look after itself."

The 'planes were quickly put into the sheds, and six very hungry boys hurried away to supper. After the evening meal they gathered again on Rand's porch and discussed the best use of their winnings. While they were talking Colonel Snow appeared and congratulated them on their successful race.

"You'll be interested to know," he added, "that I have some further information about your Alaskan treasure."

"What have you heard?" queried Rand.

"I met an old fellow who had made a small 'pile' in Alaska and returned to settle down. He was very willing to talk, and I questioned him about the country. He told me some stories of the big 'finds,' and I asked him if he had heard of any hidden treasure in the territory. After some thought he recalled a queer fellow, a sailor, whom he had met years ago. The man had had poor success in the gold-fields, but after a long trip in the mountains, he had returned with—a mammoth's tusk!"

"Crickets!" exclaimed Pepper. "It was lucky you m-met him. Now we c-can learn all about it."

"He didn't know all of it," returned the Colonel, "but while this sailor was drunk one night, he confided that he had a great store of them cached in the mountains somewhere. The sailor disposed of his spoil and, later, made several more trips, each time returning with one tusk. Eventually he returned to the States, without revealing the hiding-place of his treasure.

"Did you learn which way he travelled?" asked Jack.

"Yes," replied the Colonel. "I found out where my Alaskan was at the time and the general direc-

tion in which the trips were made. Afterward, with the aid of a map, I managed to get an idea of the part of the country in which it is probably located."

"I have a map in the house," said Rand, eagerly, hobbling off on his borrowed crutches.

"There," he added, placing it in the light from a window. "Is that large enough to show it?"

"It is probably among these mountains," replied the Colonel, pointing out a hilly section of the country. "I fear it would take a long search to find it, however."

"Faith, Oi'd be willing to search a little," said Gerald.

"While you were seeing the country, I suppose," suggested Dick.

"I wish we could all go," exclaimed Jack. "Think of all the things we could do!"

Little did he think that his hopes would come true, but how they were fulfilled and their adventures and discoveries are told in "Boy Scouts on the Yukon," which takes them to that remarkable country.

"Perhaps we can find a way," said Dick, hopefully. "Does it cost very much?"

"Several hundred dollars," replied Colonel

Snow; "but you might be able to earn enough, if you set out to do it. I would be glad to help you in any way I can."

"In my opinion," suggested Don, cautiously, "we might start a fund with our prize money if we do not spend it for something else first."

"That's a very safe opinion," remarked Rand, but I think it is a good one. All those in favor?"

"Aye!" exclaimed the Uncas Patrol, in chorus, and the motion was carried.

THE END.